

21 EASY AND ELEGANT HOLIDAY RECIPES

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THE SECRETS  
OF FRENCH  
SAUCES  
PAGE 45

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PAGE 68

## EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT **FILET MIGNON**

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DECEMBER 2008 US \$5.00



NUMBER **116**  
DECEMBER 2008  
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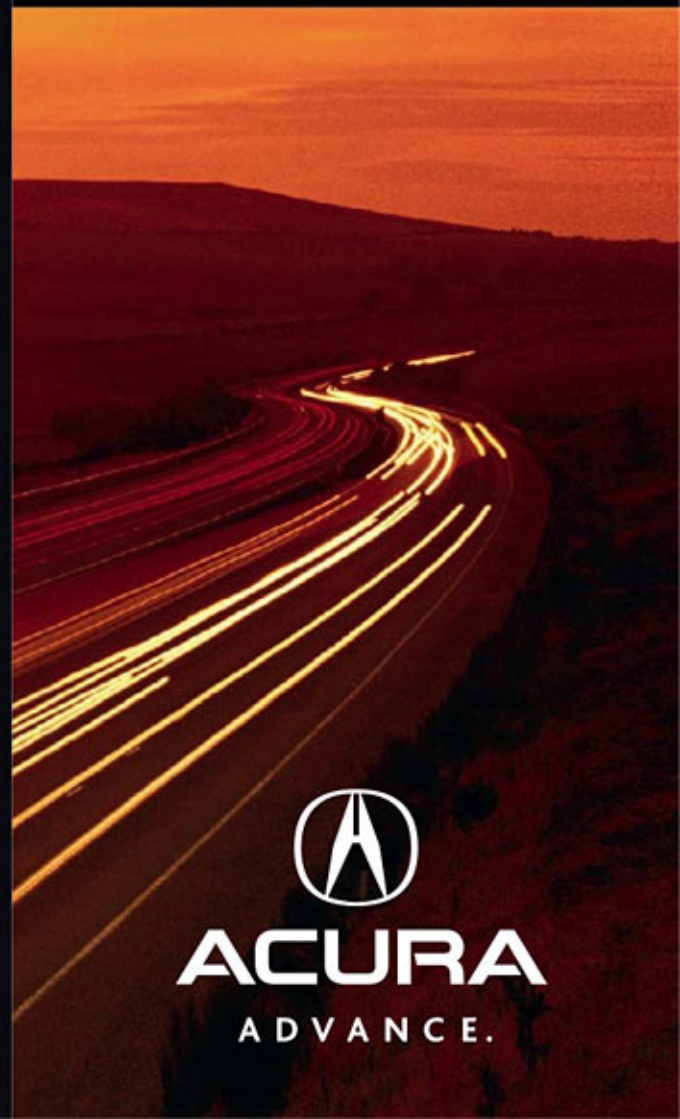
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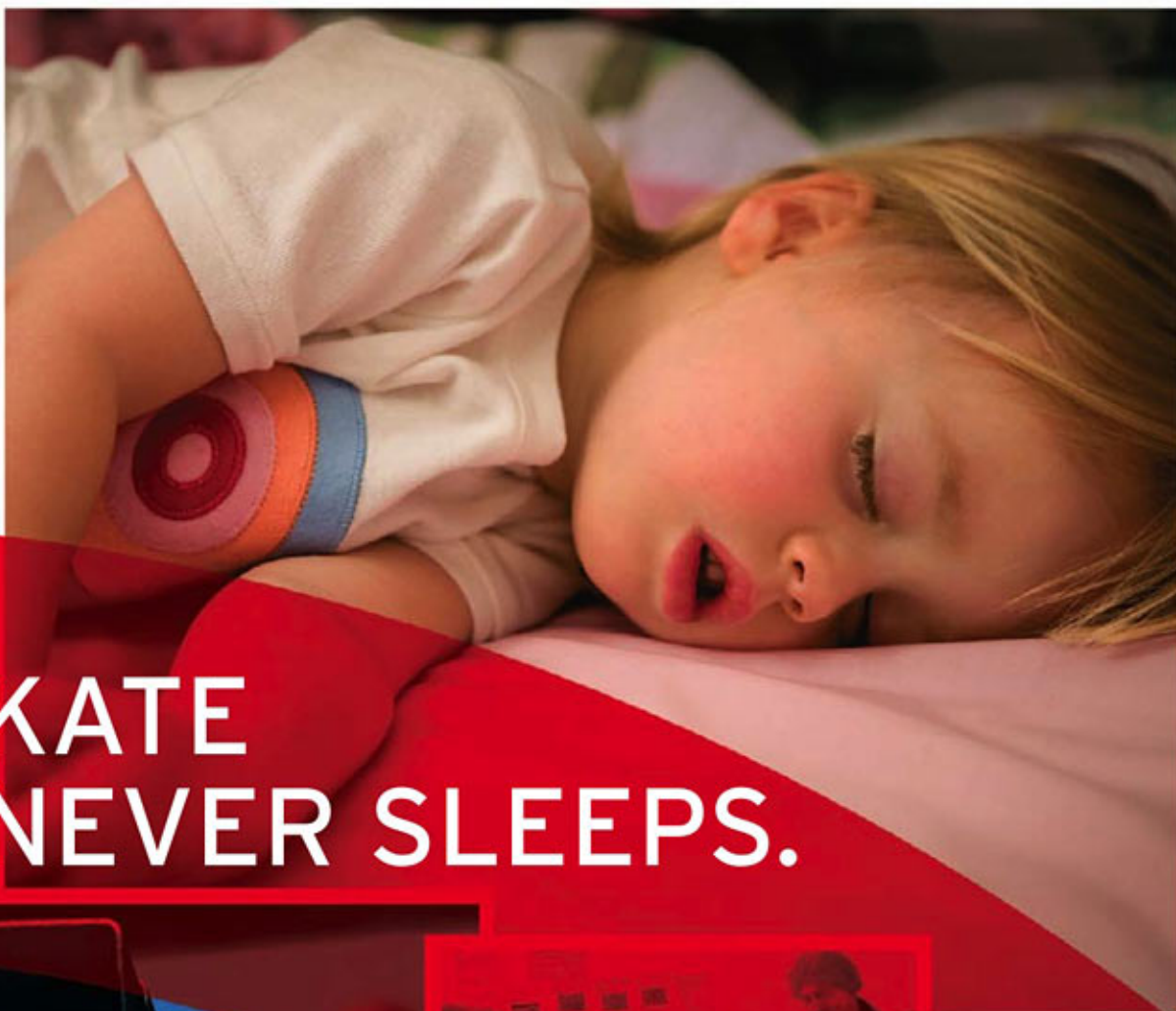
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# SAVEUR



## MOTHER SAUCE

**45** Rich and refined sauces, from chasseur to bordelaise, are pillars of classical French cuisine, and yet they're also a boon to the home cook. In this special feature: recipes for sauces to pair with everything from filet mignon to pork medallions.

BY JAMES PETERSON

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*Pan-seared filet mignon with bordelaise sauce.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

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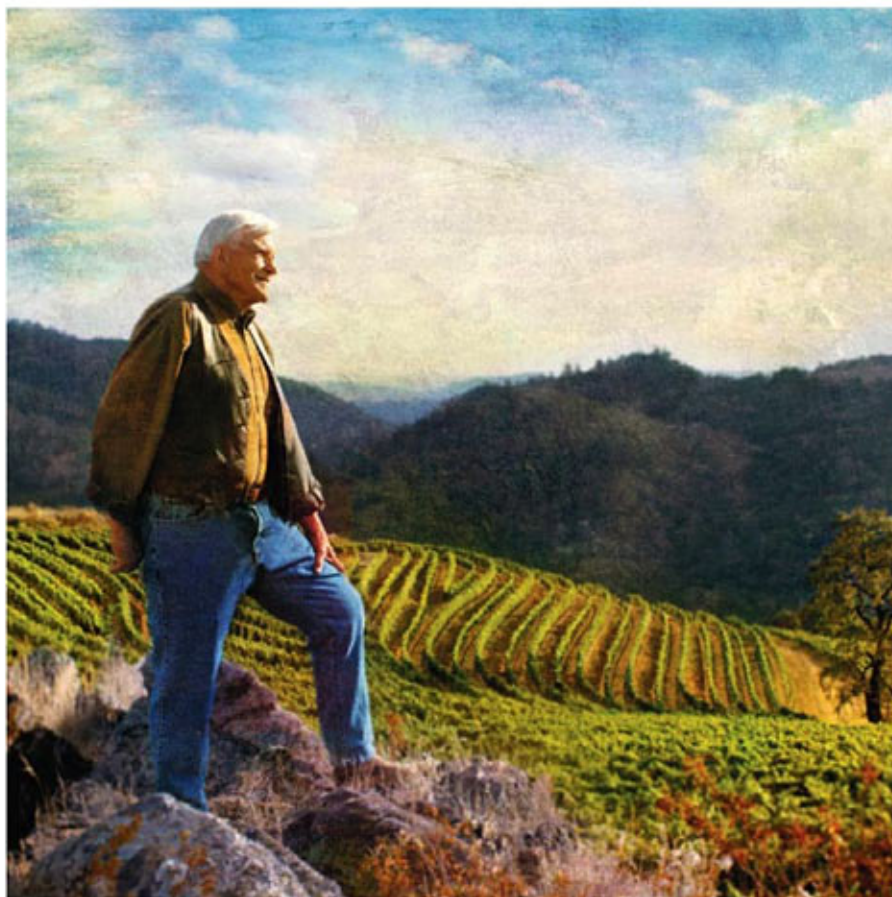
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Jess Jackson, Upper Hawkeye Mountain Estate, Alexander Valley



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## FIRST

## Worth a Thousand Words

Sometimes the best gifts are the most obvious

**M**Y PARENTS TAUGHT me that it is better to give than to receive, and I've always tried to follow that guideline, especially around the holidays. As I was reflecting on that childhood lesson recently, I realized how lucky I am to have a hand in the photography that goes into a magazine dedicated to food and culture. Photography has been a passion of mine since middle school, and, though I grew up in a meat-and-potatoes family in rural Ohio, over the years I've come to appreciate all kinds of regional cooking.

It probably started at my first job, at a newspaper in Cleveland. Right after I was hired, my colleagues took me to a Hungarian restaurant. I ordered a cheeseburger, and my dining companions threw menus at me for my obvious misstep. One of them asked the waitress to bring me chicken paprikash with dumplings instead. When the plate arrived and that burst of paprika hit my palate, I fell in love. For me, food and photography have gone together ever since, and my being able to meld these two passions in a single career has been an enormous gift. Lately I've thought about that old lesson my parents taught me, and it struck me: doing my job is also a form of giving.

For each issue of *SAVEUR*, I have the pleasure of giving assignments to talented photographers. I like the feeling I get when I pick up the phone and ask one of them whether he or she would mind traveling to some distant region of the world to photograph its food and its people. For this issue, we sent one of our most trusted photographers, Penny De Los Santos, to Italy, to

photograph a story on the Ligurian feast bread called pandolce ("Bread and Love", page 38), and also to Lebanon, to record the lives of Iraqi refugees learning to cook for themselves in a new place ("They Remember Home", page 60). Another of our photographers, David Brabyn, was given the challenge of making artful photographs while navigating the busy kitchens of France's finest culinary school ("Mother Sauce", page 45). And David Hagerman gave up his own Christmas to travel to the Philippines to docu-

ment how people in that country celebrate the holiday ("Days of Feasting", page 76).

As for Landon Nordeman, another of our regular contributors, he was put to work in our test kitchen, where he gave plenty of "punch" to our feature on holiday drinks ("With Glasses Raised", page 68). Finally, a veteran of *SAVEUR* shoots, André Baranowski, gave us the gorgeous image that graces this month's cover. It is a privilege for me and the magazine's photo editor, Paul Love, to share their photos

and to see how our art director, Dave Weaver, brings them to life on the page.

Illustrating this particular column is a photo of my cat Buddy, waiting for me to come home at the end of the day. I show it to you as a reminder that the best gifts in life are often right there with us every day. This year, take a moment to snap a picture of something or someone precious in your life. I think you will find it to be the most wonderful kind of gift: one that is as much fun to give as it is to receive. —LARRY NIGHSWANDER, *Photography Director*



Buddy awaits author Nighswander's return.



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# FARE

Memories and Marvels from the World of Food, plus Agenda and More



## Father Christmas

**I**'M NOT A FUSSY professional pastry chef; you won't find chocolate cages or spun-sugar spirals on my plates. But I reserve a special place in my heart for one dessert of the fussiest sort: a tart of peeled and hollowed-out lady apples poached in chablis syrup, filled with lemon curd, and shellacked with a sweet glaze (applied with a sable-hair artist's brush, of course). In December 1979, when I was

heading the pastry department at New York's then fledgling specialty food store Dean & DeLuca, I baked hundreds of them, including one very memorable specimen for the culinary legend James Beard (pictured above, in his Greenwich Village town house in 1978).

The tart was the creation of my boss, Felipe Rojas-Lombardi, who had been a teaching assistant to Mr. Beard, and it was a prominent



feature of the store's celebrated Christmas display. Talk about fussy: the desserts sat on towering trays, surrounded by hundreds of wildfowl, which dangled from the ceiling in a curtain of plumage.

I happened to be preparing a tart one afternoon when Mr. Beard stopped by to check in on his protégé. He was fascinated by everything going on in the kitchen, but nothing intrigued him more than that lady apple tart, and he was thrilled to learn that the pastry crust we were using was from his own recipe. As soon as he left, Felipe told me to prepare a tart to take to Mr. Beard as a present from the kitchen. "You will deliver it for Christmas Eve," he announced.

Since then I've baked under pressure for such notables as President Ford and the *New York Times* food writer Craig Claiborne, but nothing has compared to the stress I felt that day. I made the pastry dough three times before I was satisfied, and when I finished, it was nearly dusk and snowing. Felipe hustled me out the door with the instruction to take a cab to Mr. Beard's house in Greenwich Village, about 20 blocks away. Back then there wasn't much in SoHo, where the store opened its original location—few grocers, not many boutiques, and certainly no cabs, at least in the middle of a blizzard. Blinded by the snow, I followed tire tracks in the street, consumed by a single thought: Don't. Drop. The Tart.

My fingers felt frostbitten by the time I arrived at Mr. Beard's front door. He invited me inside and eagerly opened the box. "This is a treasure," he said. "I will have it with my Christmas dinner!" He shook my hand with great strength and commented on how Felipe had cultivated quite a wonderful family in his kitchen. I was momentarily overcome. Right then, I knew that none of the tarts I'd go on to make, whether fussy or plain, would ever measure up to this one. —Greg Case, with Keri Fisher



## GOOD EARTH

**I**T HAD BEEN years since I'd last broken out my old Römertopf, a clay pot roaster of German origin, so, when I heard that the company that makes it had recently celebrated its 40th anniversary, I decided to reacquaint myself with my roaster's charms. After a week of

savoring perfectly moist fish, nicely browned lamb, and deliciously crusty bread, I became a clay pot convert all over again.

My vintage Römertopf is actually one of the youngest members of a far-reaching and long-lived family of clay cooking pots. In fact, clay has been an essential part of man's

batterie de cuisine practically since the discovery of fire. Even before mud was shaped and heated to be made into cooking vessels, the ancient Etruscans of Italy wrapped meat in wet clay and set it directly into burning embers; as the clay hardened, it sealed in the food's juices and prevented it from drying



## FARE

## RECIPE

**Raan Mussalam**

(Indian-Style Lamb Pot Roast)

SERVES 8

The Römertopf roaster (see "The Clay Way", right) is the perfect vessel in which to cook this Indian-style pot roast (shown, facing page), which is typically prepared in a South Asian clay pot called a *handi*. Belonging to the family of slow, steam-cooked moghul dishes called *dum pukht*, this lamb is coated in a spice paste made with saffron, coconut, almonds, and yogurt.

- 8 cloves garlic
- 1 small onion, quartered
- 1 3" piece ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 1/2 cup unsweetened flaked coconut
- 1/3 cup blanched almonds
- 2 tbsp. plus 1 tsp. garam masala (see page 94)
- 2 tbsp. light brown sugar
- 3 tsp. saffron
- 4 serrano chiles, stemmed
- 1 1/2 cups yogurt
- 1 6-7-lb. leg of lamb, boned
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp. chopped cilantro leaves

1. In a food processor, pulse garlic, onions, ginger, raisins, coconut, almonds, 2 tbsp. garam masala, sugar, 2 tsp. saffron, and 3 chiles to a paste. Add 1/2 cup yogurt; pulse to combine. With a sharp knife, make 1/4"-deep cuts all over lamb. Season inside of lamb with salt; rub with half the yogurt mixture, working it into the cuts. Roll lamb into a cylinder; tie at 1" intervals with kitchen twine. Season outside of lamb with salt; rub with remaining yogurt mixture. Cover; let marinate for 1 hour at room temperature.

2. Finely chop remaining chile; combine with lime juice and remaining garam masala, saffron, and yogurt in a small bowl. Refrigerate sauce.

3. Soak Römertopf roaster in water for 15 minutes; drain. Put sliced onion into bottom of pot; top with lamb. Cover, place in a cold oven; turn heat to 325°. Bake until lamb is tender, about 3 hours. Uncover; cook, basting occasionally with juices, until browned, about 30 minutes more. Transfer lamb to a cutting board. Pour juices and onions into a 2-qt. saucepan; boil over high heat until reduced to 2 cups, about 15 minutes. Transfer onions to a platter with a slotted spoon. Slice lamb and lay over onions; drizzle with reduced juices and garnish with cilantro. Serve with the yogurt sauce.

out. Since then, numerous styles of clay cookware have evolved. Curious about my Römertopf's rich pedigree, I got in touch with Paula Wolfert, the California-based culinary scholar, who is working on a cookbook devoted to clay pot traditions from around the world. She explained to me that earthenware's prime appeal is its ability to distribute heat evenly and, in the case of unglazed versions, retain

moisture—whether you're using a Römertopf, a Bulgarian *gyuvech* (a ceramic pot), a Tuscan *mattone* (a terra-cotta vessel often used for pressing and crisping chicken), a Spanish *cazuela* (casserole), or a cone-shaped North African *tagine*. (See "The Clay Way", right, for more information about earthenware pots.)

The pleasures of clay pot cooking (continued on page 20)

## THE CLAY WAY

Earthenware cooking vessels come in many styles, sizes, and glazes; the following are a few of our favorites. —Kendra Racouillat



For generations, the people of central Colombia have hand-shaped La Chamba pots (above) from mica-rich clay and polished them with rocks from the Magdalena River. Both beautiful and strong, the pots impart an earthy flavor to Colombian dishes like *ajiaco* (chicken and potato stew).



Traditionally made from a mix of dense clay and fine pebbles, glazed *cazuelas* (above), or casseroles, come in many shapes and sizes and have long been central to the preparation of Spanish dishes such as the Basque specialty *bacalao al pil pil* (salt cod with olive oil, garlic, and red pepper).



In Morocco, conical, unglazed earthenware tagines (above) are used to prepare a wide variety of spicy and sweet stews (also called tagines). The architecture of the vessels is no accident; their sloping lids collect rising steam and allow moisture to rain over the food as it cooks.

In colonial New England, Puritan wives buried earthenware bean pots (below) in their burning fireplace embers after Saturday morning's meal had been cooked, thus ensuring that family members would be able to enjoy hot food on the Sabbath, which lasted from sunset on Saturday until sunset on Sunday, during which time cooking was forbidden.



Though invented by a German, the Römertopf roaster (below) is modeled on an ancient Etruscan design. Today, Römertopfs are produced in Mexico with the same, proprietary mixture of clays as the European original; they range in size from large (perfect for a leg of lamb) to petite (ideal for roasting garlic).



The Chinese sand pot (below), or *saw kuo*, has been made in southeastern China's Jiangxi Province for centuries and is believed to be among the world's oldest earthen cooking vessels. Named for its grainy-textured surface, it is glazed, except for the inner lid, which is left untreated to absorb steam during cooking.





## FARE

(continued from page 19) were unknown to many Americans when, in 1967, a German entrepreneur named Eduard Bay began selling a clay roaster called a Römertopf (literally, Roman pot). Bay's creation, inspired by the ancient Etruscans' wet clay method, was an oval-shaped, rough-surfaced vessel made of unglazed terra-cotta that comprised several different clays; the exact combination remains a company secret. When the Römertopf is prepared for use, both the top and the bottom pieces must be soaked in water until the porous clay is saturated; the bottom piece is then filled with ingredients, topped with the snug-fitting lid, set into a cold oven, and slowly taken to a higher temperature. (Clay can shatter when subjected to rapid changes in temperature.) In the oven, the vessel creates a steam chamber in which meats and vegetables braise in their own juices, while it also browns the surface of the foods with the intense heat radiated by the clay, transforming simple ingredients into an intensely aromatic meal. Though American merchants initially greeted the Römertopf with skepticism—some likened it to a covered flower pot—the product began to catch on quickly, most notably with nutrition-conscious consumers, who appreciated how clay pot cooking required little to no added fat to coax flavor from food. Over the past 40 years, more than 25 million of the pots have been sold worldwide.

Once I got back into the habit of using my Römertopf, my cooking repertoire expanded quickly, especially when it came to dishes—like raan mussalam (Indian-style lamb pot roast; pictured on page 18)—that I once thought could be made only in traditional earthen pots or ovens. More important, to borrow Wolfert's words, "the Römertopf is great for keeping dishes alive". —*Maria Speck*

## AGENDA

DECEMBER

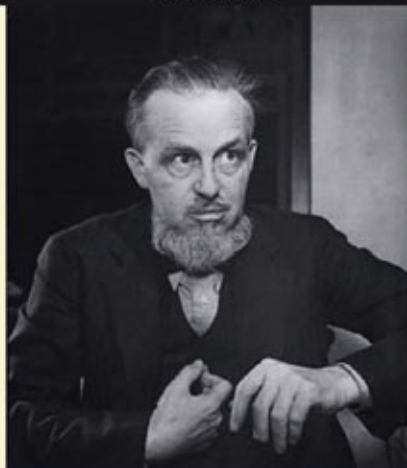
1

Birthday:

## REX STOUT

Noblesville, Indiana, 1886

In his lifetime, Rex Stout (right) authored more than 70 novels featuring the gastronome-detective Nero Wolfe, whom he described as weighing "one-seventh of a ton". In 1973, Stout published *The Nero Wolfe Cookbook*, featuring such rich Wolfe favorites as shad roe mousse Pocahontas and bread triangles fried in anchovy butter.



DECEMBER

1-31

Exhibition:

## POTATO: BREAD OF THE ANDEAN WORLD

Lima, Peru

The International Year of the Potato has not gone unnoticed in Peru, where the crop is central to Andean foodways. Until December 31, Lima's Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology, and History celebrates with a tuber-centric art exhibition. Information: [museonacional.perucultural.org.pe](http://museonacional.perucultural.org.pe).



DECEMBER

2-7

## CHOCOLART INTERNATIONAL CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL

Tübingen, Germany

Chocolate enthusiasts swarm the medieval city of Tübingen, in southwestern Germany, during this annual festival, which features chocolate sculptures, chocolate-flavored beer, and whiskey-chocolate pairings. But the event's main draw is the hundreds of artisanal chocolates available for sampling. Information: [www.chocolart.de](http://www.chocolart.de).



DECEMBER

5-7

## 6TH ANNUAL UPPER CRUST SHOW

Mumbai, India

Curious about India's burgeoning food and wine scene? Look no farther than this festival—hosted by *Upper Crust*, one of the country's most popular culinary magazines—during which innovative Indian chefs gather at Mumbai's World Trade Centre to showcase their talents alongside vintners, critics, and other culinary professionals. Information: [www.theuppercrustshow.com](http://www.theuppercrustshow.com).

DECEMBER

6-7

## FRANSCHHOEK CAP CLASSIQUE &amp; CHAMPAGNE FESTIVAL

Franschhoek, South Africa

Every December, South Africa's most respected makers of cap classique, the country's version of sparkling wine, invite their French counterparts to the town of Franschhoek to sample bubbly from both countries side by side. Also on hand: hors d'oeuvres prepared by the town's finest chefs. Information: [www.franschhoek.org.za](http://www.franschhoek.org.za).

DECEMBER

8

Seminar:

## CLASSIC HOLIDAY TIPPLES

New Orleans

This holiday-season seminar in mixology at New Orleans's Museum of the American Cocktail instructs aspiring cocktail artists (pro and amateur) in the history of traditional American holiday cocktails and cold-weather favorites like the tom and jerry and hot buttered rum. Information: [www.museumoftheamericancocktail.org](http://www.museumoftheamericancocktail.org).



DECEMBER

13

## 4TH ANNUAL INDEPENDENCE FRUITCAKE FESTIVAL

Independence, California

At this annual event in Northern California, the boozy, nut-and-fruit-filled holiday dessert we love to hate is celebrated with songs, stories, and (of course) tastings. For attendees who have eaten their fill, there is also the Fruitcake King coronation and a fiercely competitive fruitcake toss. Information: [www.inyocounty.info](http://www.inyocounty.info).

DECEMBER

24

## CHRISTMAS EVE SNACKING

Worldwide

On the night before Christmas, old Saint Nick feasts on an international buffet of snacks. In America, of course, kids leave cookies and milk out for Santa Claus, while in Sweden it's risgrönsgröt, a warm rice porridge. In Britain, tots treat Santa to a glass of sherry and mince pies, while nearby, in Ireland, they keep it simple with a glass of Guinness, naturally.



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## RECIPE

## Erbsensuppe

(German Split Pea Soup)

This recipe is based on one that appears in *German Home Cooking* by Dr. August Oetker (Bielefeld, 1963). The addition of a little flour gives the soup a smooth texture, while celery root adds an earthy note.

- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 slices bacon, finely chopped
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 rib celery, finely chopped
- 1 large carrot, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 small celery root, peeled and finely chopped
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 10 sprigs flat-leaf parsley
- 8 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 lb. green split peas, rinsed and drained
- 2 large smoked ham hocks (about 2 lbs. total)
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Place oil and bacon in a 6-qt. pot and cook over medium-high heat until crisp, about 6 minutes. Transfer bacon to paper towel with a slotted spoon; set aside. Add onions, celery, carrots, and celery root, season with salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Stir in flour; cook for 3 minutes.

2. Tie parsley, thyme, and bay leaves together with kitchen twine; add to pot with peas, ham hocks, and 7 cups water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, until peas are very tender, about 1 hour. Remove from heat. Discard herbs. Transfer hocks to a plate to let cool; pull off and chop the meat; discard fat, skin, and bones. Stir meat into soup, season with salt and pepper, and ladle soup into bowls. Sprinkle with reserved bacon.

## A CHRISTMAS STORY

**T**HE YEAR my family moved to Germany, my dad decided to commemorate our first holiday in the country by booking us on a bus trip into the Taunus Mountains, north of Frankfurt—a daylong adventure that included lunch, dinner, and the chance to chop down our own Christmas tree.

The excursion did not begin auspiciously. Mom, Dad, my three-year-old brother, Casey, and I piled into the trusty Volvo we'd had shipped over from the States, but when Dad turned the key, the engine wouldn't start. We made it to the bus depot in time, but when we tried to board, the driver claimed that we had paid for just one person. After Dad produced our receipt, we were allowed to get on, only to find that passengers were already squeezed in two to a seat. Three uncomfortable hours later, we stopped at a roadside *Gasthaus*, where we were met with cold blood sausage and potatoes. Mom was horrified. Dad nibbled cautiously. My brother and I made do with crackers. Outside, the sky darkened and the temperature dropped.

When we arrived at our destination, things didn't improve. There weren't enough axes. There weren't enough trees. In the end, we had to trudge into the woods to find a worthy specimen. As our legs sank deeper into the snow, Casey and I staved off hunger by sucking on

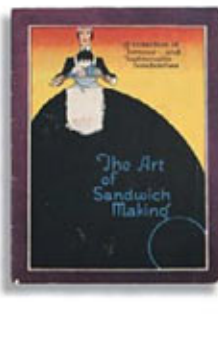
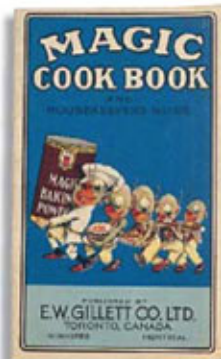


icicles. Finally, Dad spotted a fine six-foot fir, chopped it down, and dragged it back to the bus. Unfortunately, all the roof space had been taken up by other trees, so, with pine needles flying, we had to wrestle our tree on board.

Wet and exhausted, we groaned

when the bus parked in front of the same *Gasthaus* for dinner. But, to our surprise, this time we received a dose of salvation: generous bowls of erbsensuppe, a fragrant, nourishing split pea soup. Each steamy, smoky, ham-and-vegetable-packed spoonful warmed our bodies and revived our spirits. After a few minutes of silence, my dad started to laugh; soon, my mom followed suit. Maybe it was the erbsensuppe, or maybe my parents knew, then and there, that they had a good Christmas story they could tell and retell for years to come.

—Todd Coleman



## OH, CANADA!

**C**ANADIAN COOKS, take note: Elizabeth Driver is after the treasures buried in your kitchen drawers. For more than a decade, Driver, a Toronto-based food historian, has been exploring Canada's rural routes and highways, shuttling from research libraries to small-town museums to the dining rooms, attics, and pantries of ordinary homes—

all in the hope of unearthing the ephemera of her country's culinary past. The result of that quest is the new compendium *Culinary Landmarks: A Bibliography of Canadian Cookbooks, 1825–1949* (University of Toronto Press), a 1,257-page encyclopedia that catalogues nearly every cookbook, church pamphlet, and community recipe collection printed in Canada



during the 124 years the book covers.

Lacking the historical authority of French cuisine and the romantic frontier mythos of America's, Canadian food has long been something of a cipher, even for those interested in the subject—which makes Driver's work all the more groundbreaking. "I realized that until we knew what cookbooks had been written and published in Canada and where you could find them, no one could really understand and appreciate the scope and breadth of our history," she explains. Until the mid-20th century, Canada had no national library charged with collecting and recording culinary texts (and unfortunately, the cache that was shipped to the British Library for storage was destroyed by a bomb during World War II), so Driver had to prepare her project from scratch. Indeed, nearly half of the volumes profiled in *Culinary Landmarks* were discovered in private homes. "Cookbooks are the source of a real grassroots kind of knowledge," Driver says, "and it has been protected and saved and valued by ordinary people."

Driver's bibliography, which includes a handful of recipes, in effect traces the evolution of Canada's cuisine and its diverse regional components. Two centuries ago, when British influences dominated Canadian foodways, there was little difference between a cookbook published in Nova Scotia and one published in Alberta. But over time, the combined forces of climate, landscape, and immigration began to shape new Canadian cooking styles. After 1900, the Atlantic provinces could lay claim to such regional gems as Miss Nora E. Smith's scalloped clams (*National Sea Food Recipes*, Nova Scotia, 1923) and Mrs. John Robinson's moose meat pie (*Fredericton Cathedral Organ Fund Cookery Book*, New

Brunswick, 1907), while folks in Winnipeg were savoring fare influenced by the Icelandic, German, and Ukrainian families who settled there.

Other books cited in *Culinary Landmarks* reveal as much about cultural mores as they do about diet and tastes. Take the entry for the *Five Roses Cook Book*, a hugely popular compilation, created by a Montreal-based flour company, that was published, in both English and French, in 1915. Driver reproduces the covers of both editions; the English-language version depicts a wholesome-looking child in a white dress and a toque, while the apparently more libertine Quebecois are treated to a likeness of a slender, chic woman in a revealing French-maid ensemble.

Light reading this is not, but despite the book's sprawling purview, its 2,276 entries perform a remarkable service: they resurrect the legacy of cooks who would otherwise have been lost from the historical record. Open to any chapter, and you find the work of groups of women who got together to raise funds for hospitals, schools, and churches or simply to preserve their kitchen know-how in writing for a new generation of cooks. Even the tiny subarctic mining town of Yellowknife, perched on the northern shore of the Great Slave Lake, had its scribes: the Daughters of the Midnight Sun, who generously shared recipes for bannock and caribou à la mode. There is an intimacy to these glimpses of lives lived long ago and far away. For her part, Driver remains hungry for more knowledge of her country's patriot-cooks. "I can't believe I'm still interested in the subject," Driver says. "But for me, this is the beginning of a story, not the end of it."—Lea Zeltserman



## SMALL BLESSINGS

**A** FEW YEARS AGO I INVITED friends over for a holiday party featuring kitschy cocktail foods. It had seemed like a good idea at the time, but a few hours before everyone arrived, I panicked that everything I'd prepared, from the sweet-and-sour meatballs to the clam dip with Triscuits, seemed far more ironic than delicious. In desperation, I ransacked my refrigerator for something else to whip up. Then I remembered canapés, those dainty toasted white-bread cutouts canopied with savory toppings. Although canapés hail from the French tradition, they became popular in the States in the 1930s, when American home cooks were masters of creative thrift. With a hodgepodge of everyday ingredients, I made canapés with Roquefort-walnut topping, anchovy-herb butter, and even a tasty chopped-ham spread with sweet pickle relish. Alas, the retro crab dip went uneaten; the meatballs were sampled, then ignored. But the canapés were such a hit that I've recruited them for every cocktail party I've hosted since. —Dana Bowen

### METHOD

#### Roquefort and Walnut Canapés

This creamy blue cheese spread (pictured above, bottom left) makes the perfect counterpoint to crisp toast. For recipes for the other canapés pictured above, go to [SAVEUR.COM/CANAPES](http://SAVEUR.COM/CANAPES). Using a 2" round cookie cutter, cut out 32 circles from sixteen 1/4"-thick white bread slices, preferably Pepperidge Farm Very Thin Sliced Bread. Brush both sides of each circle with melted unsalted butter and transfer to a baking sheet. Toast bread in a 400° oven, turning once, until light golden, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, beat 8 tbsp. softened unsalted butter, 4 tbsp. softened cream cheese, 2 tbsp. brandy, and 1/2 tsp. dried mustard powder in a medium bowl. Stir in 8 oz. crumbled blue cheese, preferably Roquefort. Season with kosher salt. Spread about 1 tbsp. cheese mixture onto each bread circle and garnish with a flat-leaf parsley leaf and a piece of walnut. Makes 32 canapés.



# BOOK REVIEW

## Sacred Cows

Two new volumes cast light on a couple of mankind's most cherished foods

BY SARAH KARNASIEWICZ

**T**HE PAST FEW YEARS have seen a spate of books centered on the histories of single foods: salt, chocolate, chiles, and so on—books that invite readers to “see a world in a grain of sand”, to quote the poet William Blake. Having relished a few of these volumes but struggled through many others, I greeted two of the genre's latest exemplars—one on milk, the other on beef—with a skeptic's eye. Then I started reading. And I kept reading.

I began with *Milk: The Surprising Story of Milk Through the Ages* (Knopf, \$29.95) by the veteran food writer Anne Mendelson. Part historical epic, part cookbook, and part memoir, *Milk* brims with the enthusiasm of a genuine food devotee. “[T]he impetus behind this book,” the author writes in her introduction, “was my eagerness to share the voyages of culinary discovery.... What I learned, in a nutshell, is that the usual American ways with milk and dairy products are only a narrow, anomalous side-track from something immensely larger, richer, and more ancient.” Mendelson succeeds in her mission, taking readers on a journey that begins with the bold moment when man first decided to consume the milk of other animals and following the herds of sheep, goats, and cows across centuries and continents.

What's more, *Milk* accomplishes what only the best single-food histories, like Mark Kurlansky's *Cod* (Penguin, 1998) and *Salt* (Walker & Co., 2002), have done: it makes the reader see what they eat in an entirely new light. Like a culinary cartographer, Mendelson redraws borders, coining sociogeographic terms that highlight the fascinating ways human beings use dairy products. She dubs the Near East, where brined cheeses, yogurts, and the fer-

mented milk of goats, sheep, and cows figure prominently, the “Diverse Sources Belt”; a swath of the globe encompassing the Indian subcontinent is referred to as “Yogurtistan”; and most of Europe and North America falls within the “Northwestern Cow Belt”. The sweep of the narrative is anchored by a wealth of practical features, including an authoritative glossary and, most notably, recipes. There are 120 of them, for everything from Bulgarian cold yogurt soup to clotted cream. And while Mendelson doesn't shy away from such thorny issues as industrial

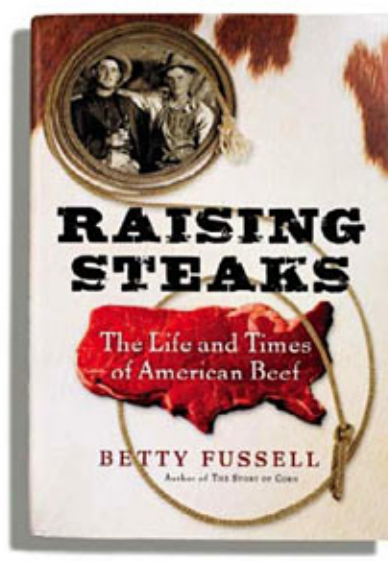
liam Morrow, 2008), but it is surely the most thorough. The author's subject comes the most vividly alive in the moments when she documents the real-life people and places that fuel the American ardor for red meat. She attends a stock show in Colorado Springs; tours the bloody floor of a meat-processing plant in Fort Dodge, Kansas; sits in on a Beef 101 class at Texas A&M's Department of Animal Science; roams grassland prairies to discover the benefits of “green” ranching; and attends an auction in Florida to get a glimpse of the endangered Pinewoods longhorn cattle.

As with Mendelson's book, the author is a player in her expansive drama, guided by an admittedly romantic attachment to the American West. Indeed, given its cast of cowboys, ranchers, and other American archetypes, *Raising Steaks* could easily have veered into the realm of cliché, but Fussell is too nuanced and engaging a writer to have let that happen. Her adventurous spirit is contagious, as is her unabashed pleasure in details, like the architectural principles of a Stetson hat and

the existence of a 19th-century cow tunnel beneath the streets of New York City.

Though she ably addresses unpalatable topics like mad cow disease and animal cruelty, the author's affection for steak—the king of the American dinner table, a symbol that unites our country's pastoral past with its industrialized present—is never dampened. I haven't ever seen that food summed up more beautifully than in Fussell's words: “It's the closest we can get to yoking the raw and the cooked, the savage and the civilized.”

**W** More of our favorite books of 2008 at [SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE116](http://SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE116)



farming and pasteurization, I finished her book feeling refreshed and enlightened.

The second of the two volumes I recently read, *Raising Steaks: The Life and Times of American Beef* (Harcourt, \$26) by the preeminent culinary historian Betty Fussell, confines itself to American shores, but the scope of the research is no less impressive. Fussell's book, the result of three years' worth of firsthand reporting, is not the only tome on the history of American beef to have been published recently (others include *Beef: The Untold Story of How Milk, Meat, and Muscle Shaped the World* by Andrew Rimas and Evan Fraser; Wil-





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# SOURCE

## Pride of Place

East Coast brawn meets West Coast brine

BY BETH KRACKLAUER

**E**ATING A GOOD RAW OYSTER is a transporting experience. Literally. Few other foods so powerfully evoke their place of origin. Because oysters feed by continuously filtering seawater, they take on the character of the local tides, vegetation, and even weather. Having recently tasted the remarkably plump and sweet oyster known as the Totten Inlet virginica, I can only conclude that its home, a pristine inlet fringed with fir trees in the far southern corner of Washington's Puget Sound, is the oyster's promised land.

And yet, the species to which this delectable mollusk belongs, *Crassostrea virginica*, is actually native to the East Coast. (It's one of only five species—along with pacific, olympia, kumamoto, and european flat—grown in the United States.) The Totten Inlet virginicas I tried came from Taylor Shellfish Farms, whose president, Bill Taylor, told me that his family's operation was one of the first to raise virginicas on the West Coast, starting in the 1890s. "There was a high demand back then," Taylor said, "with so many people with money coming to California." Many of them were Easterners with a yen for the oysters they'd left behind. Virginicas thrived in Totten Inlet, where the algae-rich waters of neighboring Little Skookum Inlet meet the brinier ones of the Puget Sound's chilly depths. In these felicitous surroundings, the virginica, prized to this day for its meaty texture and clean taste, gained something more: a singularly buttery, seaweedy flavor balanced by a bracing, oceanic briskness.

The Totten Inlet virginica was quickly recognized as a magnificent oyster, but by the 1920s nobody was raising it anymore.

Oysters of another species, known as pacific oysters, which had been introduced to America's West Coast from Japan in 1919, matured more quickly (and were therefore more profitable). Pacifics are also able to reseed themselves, whereas the cultivation of virginicas requires the shipping of seed from the East Coast for each new crop. By the 1990s, however, another gilded age was dawning in the West, renewing an appetite for raw oysters and demand for ever more varieties. The Taylor family began experimenting with virginicas again. "We had no idea what a great oyster it would turn out to be," Bill Taylor said. If any uncertainty remained, it was laid to rest earlier this year, when Taylor's Totten Inlet virginica was decreed the best-tasting oyster at an East Coast Shellfish Growers Association competition. Totten Inlet virginicas keep for up to two weeks in the refrigerator, spread out on a tray under a moist towel, though Taylor says they're the most flavorful the day they arrive. Totten Inlet virginicas cost \$9 (plus shipping) per dozen. To order, call 360/432-3300 or visit [www.taylorshellfishstore.com](http://www.taylorshellfishstore.com).

**W** Oyster recipes and a guide to shucking oysters at [SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE116](http://SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE116)



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# REPORTER

## Candyland

The handmade sweets of Puebla have deep roots in Mexico's past

BY RICK BAYLESS

**M**Y FAMILY WAS ONE of the first in our Oklahoma City neighborhood to get a color television, in 1964, and watching the Christmas specials that year was quite an event. I remember singing along to Mitch Miller's bouncing-ball lyrics as my siblings and I hand-rolled a mixture of "angel flake" coconut, condensed milk, and powdered sugar into little spheres, skewered them with toothpicks, and dipped them in melted chocolate chips thickened with paraffin. The treats were called Sputniks, perhaps because they orbited around every aspect of the Christmas vortex that engulfed our family each year. We were a modern family, having chosen a modern sweet (practically everything in a Sputnik came from shiny, bright-colored packages) to lavish on friends and family, and my mother was no longer interested in the production involved in making pecan candy or humidity-sensitive, meringue-like divinities.

Once I left home, my affection for Sputniks and their ilk waned. In fact, my enthusiasm for candy had nearly evaporated by the time I spent my first Christmas in Mexico, in 1990. There, in the country's old colonial cities, I discovered a deep-rooted candy-making tradition that produced delicious sweets not unlike the ones my relatives used to make in pre-Sputnik days: fudges made without cocoa, melt-in-your-mouth cookies, and lots of meringue. I soon learned that such sweets are year-round treats in Mexico, but I always link them to Christmas, if for no other reason than the fact that I've spent the holidays in Mexico for the past two decades.

I'd always wanted to replicate those tradi-

tional Mexican confections at home, but given my Sputnik-era upbringing, I've had to build my own, from-scratch candy-making tradition from the ground up. That's what has taken me back to the colonial city of Puebla, Mexico's home base when it comes to anything sweet.

CHRISTMAS FALLS during the dry season in Mexico, which means that all the pines and oaks and cinder-block buildings you pass on the ascent from Mexico City toward the smoking volcanic peak of Popocatepetl are covered with dust. But then you crest a 9,000-foot pass, where the air is clean and the pines are pristine, and descend to a superhighway toll booth, where you're greeted by camote vendors. Puebla's most famous sweet (though hardly my favorite), camotes are made from white-flesh sweet potatoes that are puréed and cooked with sugar into toothsome candies, which are sold by the thousands to motorists approaching the city.

Most visitors get to know Puebla, which was founded by the Spanish in the 16th century, as a super-religious town, where mass seemingly can be said in a different church every day of the year. It is also the home of the ultra-Baroque Rosary Chapel, the restored Santa Rosa and Santa Clara convents, and the Talavera-style tile work that's mortared into virtually all the city's famous buildings.

There's another way to get a sense of Puebla, though. It's by traveling along the narrow downtown street labeled Calle 6 Oriente, where some two dozen traditional candy shops are clustered, each of them stocked with an eye-popping array of sweet creations. The ones that stood out to me the most on my first visits to the city were of a variety already familiar to me: brittles. The Mexican versions of that candy are more densely packed with nuts (and, in some cases, seeds) than American brittles are. And they're easier to make, consisting of nothing more than some caramelized sugar with stuff stirred in: pea-

### RECIPE

#### Rompope

(Mexican Eggnog)

MAKES 1 QUART

Rich, thick, and sweet, this cinnamon-and-vanilla-flavored milk liqueur (shown on facing page) is a delicious alternative to store-bought eggnog during the holidays. When reducing the milk, use the tallest pot you have on hand to prevent the milk from accidentally boiling over.

- 4 cups milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick, preferably Mexican canela
- 6 egg yolks
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup light or golden rum
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract, preferably Mexican (see page 94)

**1.** In a tall 4-qt. nonreactive pot, stir together milk, sugar, and cinnamon. Place over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Do not stir the milk, but use a spoon to skim off and discard any skin that forms on the surface of the liquid. Boil until the mixture is reduced to about  $2\frac{3}{4}$  cups, 25-30 minutes. Remove and discard the cinnamon.

**2.** Whisk egg yolks in a medium metal bowl. While whisking yolks constantly, slowly drizzle in the hot milk mixture. Set the bowl over a saucepan of gently simmering water, making sure the bottom of the bowl does not touch the water, and cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the mixture thickens enough to coat the back of the spoon or until it reaches 175° on an instant-read thermometer, about 5 minutes. Immediately place the bowl in a larger bowl of ice water and let cool, stirring frequently. Whisk in the rum and vanilla.

**3.** Strain the mixture through a fine sieve into a 1-qt. jar or bottle. Refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight to allow flavors to meld. Serve chilled.

RICK BAYLESS, a *SAVEUR* contributing editor, is the chef and owner of the Chicago restaurants *Frontera Grill* and *Topolobampo* and the host of the PBS series *Mexico, One Plate at a Time*.





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Pictured on this page, a few of Puebla's traditional confections: **1** Jamoncillo de frutas y nueces (milk fudge with fruit and nuts; see recipe on page 30). **2** Tortitas de santa clara (waferlike cookies with a pumpkinseed filling). **3** Tamarindo con azucar y chile (tamarind candies made with chiles). **4** Picones (sweet-potato candies, similar to camotes). **5** Macarrones (caramel-like fudges pressed into pasta shapes). **6** Calaveritas de azucar (skull-shaped sugar candies). **7** Fruta cristalizada (candied fruits). **8** Heart-shaped camotes (sweet-potato candies). **9** Rompope (Mexican eggnog; see recipe on facing page). **10** Polvorones sevillanos (cookies made with toasted flour). **11** Gaznates (meringue-filled pastries).



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11



## REPORTER

nuts, pumpkinseeds, sesame seeds, amaranth seeds, pecans, pine nuts, and so on.

What many visitors notice first in these stores, though, is the candied fruits. These are not the gummy bits that perform the title role in American fruitcakes; they are beautiful, recognizable examples of Mexico's temperate-climate bounty. Whole figs, slices of papaya and pineapple, squashlike chilacayote, oranges—they all get slowly crystallized into candies that taste like the original fruit. Others, like fresh coconut, are shredded before being candied and then

flavored (or not), pressed into dozens of shapes, and glazed with a range of finishes so that they become such sweets as cocada horneada (a layered dessert of ladyfingers and sherry) and bocado real (a brandy-infused sweet).

And we haven't even gotten to my favorites: the milk fudges, those slow-cooked, silky milk-sugar candies. Often called *jamoncillos* (literally, little hams) or, more prosaically, *dulces de leche* (milk candies), they come in many flavors, shapes, and textures, with or without nuts or pumpkinseeds. Personally, I'm wild about

BY THE EARLY 20TH century, after the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the violent, anti-Catholic aftermath of the Cristero Revolt, which followed, the power of the Catholic church had declined and many nunneries had ceased to operate in the open. So, it came as no surprise that sweets-making convents weren't easy to find when I made a visit to Puebla last December. Some of the big, old downtown convents are now museums, and the functioning ones look like unmarked residences. I'd asked my friend Ana Elena Martínez, a Puebla

## RECIPE

**Jamoncillo de Frutas y Nueces**

(Milk Fudge with Fruit and Nuts)

MAKES SIXTY-FOUR 1" SQUARES

These milk candies (shown on previous page) get their silky texture from sweetened milk. See page 94 for hard-to-find ingredients.

- 4 cups sugar
- 2 cups milk
- 1 stick cinnamon, preferably Mexican *canela*
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. fine salt
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup mixed candied fruit, cut into 1/4" pieces
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted pecans
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted walnuts
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted pine nuts

**1.** In an 8-qt. pot, whisk together sugar, milk, cinnamon, corn syrup, baking soda, and salt. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat; do not stir the milk. Use a metal spoon to skim off and discard any foam or solids that rise to the surface, rinsing the spoon in water after each use. Simmer, brushing the sides of the pot occasionally with water to prevent the sugar from crystallizing, until the mixture thickens and a candy thermometer reads 240°, about 30–35 minutes.

**2.** Remove pot from heat. Add butter and vanilla; do not stir. Remove and discard cinnamon. Let mixture cool to 180°.

**3.** Grease an 8" x 8" baking pan; line bottom with greased parchment paper. Stir milk-sugar mixture with wooden spoon until no longer glossy, 5 minutes. Add fruit, pecans, walnuts, and pine nuts; stir to combine. Transfer to baking pan; smooth surface with a rubber spatula. Chill until set, about 8 hours. Turn fudge out onto a cutting board and cut into sixty-four 1" squares.



From left, a Puebla sweets shop; Gabriela Bojalil preparing the dough for *polvorones sevillanos*.



the big slabs of milk fudge studded with native pecans or pine nuts (called *jamoncillo de nuez* and *jamoncillo de piñon*, respectively) and the caramelly fudges (*macarrones*) enriched with eggs and pressed through a pastry tip into a shape reminiscent of pasta.

Another reason I'm partial to the sweets of Puebla is that their origins are so intertwined with Mexico's history. As Spain expanded its conquest of Mexico in the early decades of the 16th century, the conquistador Hernán Cortés introduced sugarcane cultivation and cattle ranching in parts of the country, just as Catholicism was extending its reach with newly founded churches, missions, and, later on, convents. Those convents became repositories of Spanish culture, scholarship, and foodways; upper-crust young ladies were sent to them for instruction in the "feminine arts," which included candy making. And because the sisters relied on the indigenous population for their provisions, the nuns in effect became alchemists who fused Spanish confectionery techniques with new-world ingredients to create a precious new commodity: Mexican sweets.

native, to lead me to them. Her grandmother had sheltered nuns in her home during the height of the Cristero Revolt, and Ana Elena had grown up buying sweets at the convents.

The nuns of most of these orders are sequestered, so their contact with laypersons is limited. At many of the convents we visited, samples of the nuns' work were displayed on small tables in dark rooms, and purchases were made through tiny revolving doors or across six-foot-high partitions. At the Convento de las Agustinas, we bought beautifully decorated bricks of *jamoncillo* and exquisitely molded and painted "peaches" made of an especially rich milk fudge. At the Convento de Santa Catarina de Siena, we found more-varied offerings, including *rompope*, an eggnog liqueur; *buñuelos de viento*, rosette-like fritters; and *tortitas de santa clara*, ridged, waferlike cookies with a pumpkinseed filling.

As we drove back to her house after visiting the convents, Ana Elena told me that the nuns her grandmother had taken in had taught their benefactor the intricacies of Pueblan sweets, eventually helping her to fill seven volumes of



## REPORTER

recipes in beautiful script: for coconut cocadas, marshmallow-like meringues, goats' milk caramel puddings (called cajetas), milk fudge molded and colored so that it looked like little apples, and more. From those recipes and with the help of her grandmother Ana Elena herself had learned the art of sweets making.

Though her *abuelita* passed away in 2007, the colonial-era house she lived in, with its tiled courtyard and traditional *bodega*, or storeroom, is still meticulously maintained; a tiny passageway connects it to the more



modern home where Ana Elena grew up. The old house's kitchen is welcoming and bright, and an ancient-looking basalt grinding stone, called a *metate*, juts out from one wall. Here, in her grandmother's kitchen, Ana Elena showed me how she makes old-fashioned macarrones.

We arrived at the house midafternoon and got right to work. After plunking a well-worn, hand-hammered copper *cazo* (a kind of kettle) onto her grandmother's antique Tappan range, we boiled sugar syrup to just the right stage, added egg yolks and sherry, boiled it all until we could see through to the bottom of the pan, and then began to beat the mixture until it turned satiny. Finally, we poured this velvety, rich-tasting "fudge" into an aluminum piping gun and turned out the ridged pasta shapes.

It was remarkable how quickly that old kitchen lulled me into the slower rhythms this kind of candy making requires. At home, tackling similar confections with stainless-steel cookware, motorized beaters, and ticking timers, I'd get impatient. Ana Elena said that her friends, in their more modern kitchens, have grown less patient, too. "Hardly any of them make these

candies anymore. For them, everything's gelatin molds, mousses, and layer cakes."

THE NEXT DAY, I took a walk along Calle 6 Oriente, stopping in at shops jam-packed with colorful, cellophane-wrapped treats. As always, I was staggered by the offerings. Most were sweet, like the beautifully canned peaches and other fruit, pumpkinseed and almond marzipan figurines, chile-spiked tamarind candies, caramel-like cajetas. Others were savory, like the pickled chipotle peppers and the mole pastes. There were also trays of what Americans might call pastries, like the waferlike tortitas de santa clara, the meringue-filled pastry shells called gaznates, and the tiny, delicate cookies called polvorones sevillanos.

Though my destination that morning, the nearby workshop of Juan Manuel Hernández, has built its reputation on its excellent tortitas de santa clara, Hernández and his grown daughters, Lupita and Stephanie, were making polvorones sevillanos when I arrived. Now, to call polvorones sevillanos "cookies" is somewhat misleading, as the dough for them would seem alien to many American cookie makers, and the confections are baked to such a degree of fragility that they have to be wrapped individually. Still, they look like cookies. I watched as Hernández's daughters expertly hand-kneaded mountains of toasted flour and pork lard, rolled out the dough, cut it, and placed the polvorones on large bak-

ing sheets. It was rustic, get-your-hands-dirty baking, somewhat at odds with the daughters' highlighted hair, manicured nails, and Dolce & Gabbana T-shirts.

The only polvorones sevillanos I know of that are more delicate than Hernández's are made by a close friend of Ana Elena's named Gabriela Bojalil, a second-generation Lebanese Mexican who sells her polvorones to friends and acquaintances. Toward the end of my stay, Ana Elena arranged for us to pay her a visit at her home, in a planned community of free-standing ranch houses outside Puebla's old colonial center. Except for the agaves and prickly pears outside and the profusion of colorful handmade tiles, the house looked very much like the Oklahoma City home of my youth: a driveway and carport, a smallish kitchen with built-in plywood cabinets and wall ovens, and a family room—dining room combo.

As I watched Bojalil toast flour, mix it with powdered sugar and Mexican cinnamon, and then maneuver in the fresh, perfectly pliable pork lard, I wished that modernity hadn't displaced tradition in the creating of the Christmas sweets of my youth. When Bojalil's three school-age kids came into the kitchen to help wrap the cookies in fringed tissue, I found myself hoping I'd be back in Puebla 25 years from now watching them, in their own homes with their own children, painstakingly making these unique, melt-in-your-mouth treasures just the way they've always been made. 

## 7 SWEET SPOTS IN PUEBLA

**DULCERIA LA COLONIAL DE PUEBLA** Calle 6 Oriente No. 207A (52/222/232-3733). In addition to selling dozens of kinds of sweets, owner Guillermo Torres Villega offers savory attractions: most notably, moles caseros (house-made mole sauces).

**DULCERIA LA GRAN FAMA** Calle 6 Oriente No. 208 (52/222/242-3316). Founded 140 years ago, this shop sells excellent canelón (cinnamon candy) and novias de leche (caramel-like sweets).

**DULCERIA EL LIRIO** Calle 6 Oriente No. 204 (52/222/232-2366). Tortitas de santa clara (wafer-like cookies filled with a pumpkinseed paste) are the most popular sellers at this century-old shop.

**DULCERIA SANTA CLARA** Calle 6 Oriente No.

8 (52/222/246-0610). A highlight of this shop's huge sweets selection is the borrachitos (brightly colored candies made with Mexican egg nog).

**DULCERIA SANTA MONICA** Calle 6 Oriente No. 207E (52/222/232-3571). This store is known for its wide selection of camotes, the sweet-potato candies that are a signature Puebla treat.

**DULCERIA YOLANDA** Calle 6 Oriente No. 14 (52/222/246-1340). The pasta-shaped fudges known as macarrones are the specialties of the house.

**LA FAMA DE SANTA CLARA** Calle 6 Oriente No. 212 (52/222/232-6019). Try the exquisitely smooth dulces de leche (milk candies) made with pine nuts, coconut, and cinnamon.



# CLASSIC

## Winter Treasure

Homemade pâtés offer an elegant way to start a holiday feast

BY HUNTER LEWIS

**C**ONVENTIONAL WISDOM HAS long dictated that making pâté, like making sausage, is a task best left to the seasoned charcutier or chef. And while artisanal butchers are embracing all kinds of handmade pâtés and savory terrines and mousses nowadays, these elegant dishes have yet to cross over into everyday kitchens on a large scale. Now the feasting season is upon us, and it's time for home cooks to throw open their doors. Rich yet not greasy or leaden, boldly seasoned yet nuanced in flavor, a good homemade pâté served with crusty bread, cornichons, and mustard is, in my book, the best imaginable prelude to a big holiday meal or even just a hearty wintertime supper.

The range of dishes grouped these days under the category of pâté is vast, encompassing everything from rustic pork spreads to refined mousses of truffles and goose liver. In France, where pâté as we know it originated in the Middle Ages, a clear distinction once existed between terrines, which were customarily cooked in an earthenware mold (also called a terrine), and pâtés, which were baked in a pastry crust. But, like many cooks these days, I've taken to using the terms interchangeably.

While fish and vegetable terrines have their place on the table, during the winter I go for pâtés made with meat and poultry. The foundation of

such pâtés is a forcemeat: a fine mixture of chopped, seasoned meat and liver, to which nuts, larger pieces of meat, and other ingredients—collectively called garniture—may be added for a more variegated texture. Indeed, when it comes to pâtés, texture is paramount. Some are velvety smooth; others, like the French country-style pork loaf known as *pâté de campagne*, are coarser. And while assembling a pâté doesn't take long, cooking it is a slow and gentle process; most recipes call for baking it in a water bath to ensure even cooking.

My first try at making *pâté de campagne*—which consists of pork fat and shoulder (or just pork jowls), chicken livers, and eggs, all seasoned with garlic, thyme, and *quatre épices* (a blend of nutmeg, black pepper, cloves, and ginger)—yielded something that tasted good but had a pasty, uniform texture. For help, I turned to Richard Olney's *Simple French Food* (Macmillan, 1974), which recommends chopping the meat by hand rather than subjecting it to “the violence” of a food processor's blades, as I had done. On my second attempt, I took a middle road, chopping the meat and fat first and then quickly pulsing it in a food processor with the chicken livers, which I'd already puréed. The small adjustment produced impressive results: the pâté was dotted with bits of flavorful pork and ivory white fat and was much more pleasurable to eat.

The next time I made pâté, I decided to aim for something more sophisticated: one of squab and chanterelles. Mindful of Olney's advice, I took care not to overprocess the ingredients, and, sure enough, when I cut into my creation after letting it set, a beautiful mosaic of succulent meat and mushrooms revealed itself. Then I took a taste: bland. I'd underseasoned the dish. Pâtés are often served chilled, and cold inhibits flavor, so on my second try I added more salt and also some *piment d'Espelette*, a mild ground red chile. The outcome? Better, but short of perfect. So, I sought the help of a pro: Sylvain Gasdon, the charcutier at the New York City restaurant Bar Boulud and a protégé of Gilles Verot, one of the best charcutiers in Paris. He imparted to me yet another secret of the pâté maker's art: patience. The forcemeat and garniture must marinate with their seasonings for 48 hours and then sit in their mold for at least a day so that the flavors will meld. “It can't be rushed,” he said.

After talking with Gasdon, I felt well armed for my next foray: a duck and pistachio pâté. I let the duck meat bathe overnight in orange liqueur, garlic, and crushed bay leaves while the forcemeat—basically a *pâté de campagne*—quick-cured with garlic, thyme, and spices. The next day I assembled my pâté, adding pistachios and green peppercorns and lining the mold with bacon, before slow-cooking it in the oven in a water bath and then allowing it to set in the refrigerator overnight. The next afternoon, I tasted it. Marveling at the full-flavored delicacy, I was filled with the kind of contentment that can come only from waiting. 🍴





# PÂTÉ DE CANARD

(Duck Pâté)

Patience is the key to making this flavorful pâté (pictured on facing page). Before it is assembled, the ingredients should marinate overnight, and the finished pâté should set for at least a day after it's cooked so that the flavors meld.

- 2 duck breasts (about 1 lb.), trimmed of skin and fat
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 tbsp. orange liqueur, such as Grand Marnier
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 9 fresh or dried bay leaves
- 1 lb. boneless pork shoulder, chilled
- 3/4 lb. fatback, chilled
- 1/4 lb. chicken livers
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 tbsp. chopped thyme leaves plus 8 sprigs
- 1/2 tsp. ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp. piment d'Espelette or paprika
- 4 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/3 cup shelled pistachios
- 3 tbsp. dried green peppercorns
- 12-15 slices bacon



**1 CUT THE** duck breasts into 1/2" cubes. Transfer duck, 1 finely chopped clove garlic, orange liqueur, 1 tbsp. of the olive oil, and 3 torn bay leaves to a small bowl; stir to coat the duck pieces (above). Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 day and up to 3 days, to allow the flavors to come together. (The longer the duck

marinates, the better the pâté will taste.) Cut the pork shoulder and the fatback into thin sheets. Cut sheets lengthwise into 1/8"-wide strips. Cut strips crosswise into 1/8" cubes. Mound the pork and fatback into separate piles on the cutting board and finely chop them by running a chef's knife over the piles several times; transfer pork and fat to bowls and set aside in the refrigerator to let chill.



**2 MEANWHILE**, in the bowl of a food processor, finely chop the remaining garlic. Scrape the sides of the bowl with rubber spatula. Add chicken livers and pulse until puréed. Add reserved pork and fat (above). In short bursts, pulse until the mixture resembles coarse hamburger meat, about 20 pulses. Transfer pork-liver mixture to a large bowl. Add eggs, chopped thyme, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, piment d'Espelette, and salt. Mix the ingredients together with your hands until well combined. Test the mixture for seasoning



by heating remaining olive oil in an 8" skillet over medium-high heat. Transfer a pinch of the mixture to skillet and cook, flipping once, until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Taste; adjust seasoning accordingly. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 day and up to 3 days, to allow the meats to cure and the flavors to come together.

**3 WHEN YOU'RE** ready to assemble the pâté, remove bay leaves from duck mixture; discard. Using a spoon, fold duck mixture and any juices from marinade into the forcemeat along with the pistachios and peppercorns (below left); set aside in the refrigerator.

**4 MEANWHILE**, line the bottom of a 1 1/2-qt. rectangular terrine mold (see page 94) with 4 evenly spaced thyme sprigs and 3 bay



leaves. Place bacon crosswise along the bottom and up the sides of the mold, covering the herbs (above).

**5 SPOON THE** meat-duck mixture into the terrine mold (top right) and gently smooth the top with the back of a spoon. Lay 4 strips bacon lengthwise across the top of the pâté. Cover bacon with remaining thyme sprigs and bay leaves. Cover the top of the pâté with 2 sheets of aluminum foil; crimp foil around edges of the mold to form a tight seal.



**6 HEAT OVEN** to 325°. Transfer terrine mold to a 9" x 13" baking dish. Transfer dish to middle rack of the oven. Pour in enough boiling water that it reaches 1/2" up the sides of the terrine. Bake the pâté until an instant-read thermometer inserted into center reads 158°, about 2 hours. Transfer baking dish to a rack; remove foil. Cut out 2 rectangles of cardboard to fit inside rim of terrine mold. Wrap cardboard rectangles in foil and place them over pâté. Place three 15-oz. soup cans atop cardboard; let sit in water bath for 1 hour; remove. (Weighting makes the pâté easier to slice.) Refrigerate pâté (in its mold) for at least 1 day and up to 4 days. To serve,



slide a knife along edges of pâté to loosen it. Invert the pâté onto a cutting board and slide a butter knife along one short edge to free the pâté from the mold (above). Cut into 3/4" slices and serve with baguette, dijon mustard, and cornichons. Serves 12-14 as an appetizer. —H.L.





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# KITCHENWISE



## It's All Kosher

A kitchen where cooking sustains body and spirit

BY GEORGIA FREEDMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSH WAND

**O**N MY LAST VISIT TO MY sister-in-law Rebecca Ben-Gideon's house in Madison, Wisconsin, I had the chance to watch her make challah, a traditional Jewish bread, as she does every Friday in preparation for the Sabbath. Working at the counter of her bright, airy kitchen, she started with a ball of spongy dough that had been rising on her kitchen counter all morning and divided it into six long strands, which she quickly and expertly wove together to form an intricate loaf.

For the past eight years, ever since I met my husband, Josh Wand, his sister Rebecca and their mother, Barbara Wand, have been teaching me their favorite recipes. Much of Jewish observance revolves around food, and so in passing along the recipes they use for latkes at Hanukkah and for

Rebecca makes challah with her husband and son close at hand.



## KITCHENWISE

honey cake at Rosh Hashanah, they have been sharing an integral aspect of their faith. In the process, they have also revealed something more basic about Jewish cooking: the art and science of keeping a kosher kitchen.

When Rebecca and her husband, Joshua Ben-Gideon, who are both rabbis in the Conservative branch of Judaism, moved with their three children to Madison earlier this year, they were confronted anew with figuring out how best to organize their kitchen to accommodate the laws of kashrut, the dietary regulations that observant Jews follow the world over. At their core, these ancient laws are fairly simple: meat and dairy may not be mixed at any time; meat must come from herbivorous fowl or from an animal that has cloven hooves and chews its cud, and it must be slaughtered and prepared properly; and fish may be eaten only if it has both fins and scales. In practice, however, these rules present some interesting challenges, because the plates, utensils, and cooking implements used for meat and dairy foods must be kept separate to prevent any transfer (even microscopic) of one kind of food to the other.

The kitchen of the Ben-Gideons' new home had not been designed with kosher cooking in mind, and they knew that they would not be able to remodel it right away, but its generous size appealed to them because they often have relatives (and their three children) helping them cook. "The most important thing was to find a house that would work for our family," Joshua explained to me. "We could have figured out how to work with almost any kitchen." Some elements of the existing design happened to meet their needs perfectly. Two wide, glass-fronted cabinets near the door to the dining room proved ideal for housing their two sets of dishes, a white set for meat meals and a blue-rimmed set for dairy meals. Felicitously, the large island at the opposite end of the kitchen also had cabinets

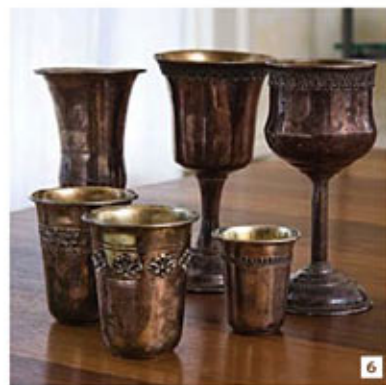
**W** More photos at  
SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE116

and drawers on two sides—a convenient arrangement for keeping cookware separate. Additional cabinets near the sink provided

space for the pots and pans used for pareve foods (those that are neither meat nor dairy, like vegetables). To make the kitchen easier to navigate, Rebecca and Joshua labeled the insides of cabinets and drawers with stickers that say "Meat" and "Dairy", so if a guest has to find the proper spoon to use for stirring milk into coffee, the labels will point the way.

Other problems could not be solved quite so easily. Unlike the kitchen in their last home, this one has only one dishwasher, so the couple decided to devote it exclusively to dairy dishes, which they use the most frequently, and to hand-wash everything else. Likewise, they don't have room for separate magnetic strips for holding meat and dairy knives, so both sets are kept in one knife block, and they use two different brands to distinguish them. As for the daily routines that are not dependent on the kitchen's design, they were simply carried over from their previous house—for instance, the use of different-colored dish towels and sponges for cleaning and drying meat and dairy items.

The thought and organization invested in this kitchen make it a remarkably efficient and relaxing work space. Whenever I've helped make a meal there, I've found that I can position myself in one part of the kitchen and have all the appropriate cooking tools within easy reach—something I've never been able to achieve in my own kitchen. On my most recent visit, while watching Rebecca form and bake the challah that she would later bless at the start of our meal, I was struck by another of the kitchen's features, one far more profound than how accessible the pots and pans are: the real reward of keeping a kosher kitchen is that it turns the preparing of food into an act of observance, a daily sacrament that makes the feeding of family a way of feeding the soul as well. 



**1** From left, Jennifer Rubio (Rebecca's sister), Mitchell Wand (her father), Steve Rubio (Jennifer's husband), and Joshua eat in the dining room, just off the kitchen. Because Rebecca and Joshua are both rabbis and therefore often have guests for holiday meals, a large dining room is essential. The room's built-in shelving and sideboard also give them room to store the dishes that do not fit in the kitchen, like their serving bowls. **2** Rebecca's challah, ready for the oven. **3** On the stovetop, pans hold various elements of the dish kasha varnishkas, a family favorite. Pictured counterclockwise from bottom right are sautéed onions, kasha (buckwheat groats), bow-tie pasta, and the assembled dish. **4** Rebecca's daughter Lena and son, Noam, help their grandmother Barbara cook at the kitchen's island. The island was designed with ample space on either side, which allows the kids room to pull up step stools and join in. **5** As in many Jewish homes, Rebecca and Joshua (pictured) often serve multiple meat dishes at holiday meals. To accommodate that, Joshua purchased an outdoor smoker so that he can smoke brisket while he has a turkey roasting in the oven. **6** Rebecca and Joshua have a number of tableware pieces that are used only for certain holidays or ceremonies, including these silver cups, which are used for saying kiddush, the traditional blessing of the wine; two extra sets of dishes for Passover; and apple-shaped plates for serving apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah.





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# BREAD *and* L

For a pair of bakers in Italy, perfecting the Ligurian Christmas treat known as pandoro





# OVE

olce is a passionate pursuit *by* Laura Schenone *photographs by* Penny De Los Santos



## We're on our way to the baker's house.

We've left behind the city of Genoa—its winding medieval streets and blinking holiday lights—to drive an hour north into the hills, to a town called Savignone. As we pass snow-covered fields and frozen vegetable gardens, my photographer friend Penny surprises me



by referring to “the old man and his wife” whom we are going to visit.

“Where did you get the idea that he’s old?” I ask, incredulously. She got it from me, of course. I’d described Adriano Alvigini as a sixth-generation baker who was going to show me how to make true pandolce, a Christmas bread that has deep roots here in Liguria, in the northwest of Italy. Like most people, Penny hadn’t expected the keeper of such an old recipe to be young.

Around dusk, we pull up to a large stone house, and Harriet, Adriano’s Welsh-born wife, comes rushing out to meet us. “You made it!”

she says. Harriet is the young foreigner who fell for the handsome town baker. Six years ago, when she was visiting Liguria, she asked Adriano whether she could work a night shift at his bakery, because she wanted to learn his craft. They’ve been together ever since. Penny and I follow her down a path to a tiny wood cabin that Adriano and his father built several years ago expressly for baking. Inside, it’s uncluttered and peaceful; a fire blazes in a brick oven set into one wall, casting an amber glow across the room. On a wooden worktable sit the makings

**Above, from left, Adriano Alvigini forms loaves of pandolce at his home bakery in Savignone; Adalgiza and Salvatore Schenone, circa 1940. Facing page, Genoa’s historic center.**

LAURA SCHENONE is the author of *The Lost Ravioli Recipes of Hoboken* (Norton, 2007). This is her first article for SAVEUR.





## RECIPE

**Pandolce Alto**

(Leavened Fruit-and-Nut Bread)

MAKES 4 SMALL LOAVES

This slightly sweet fruit-and-nut-studded bread is like a cross between biscotti and a dense, moist fruitcake. This recipe is based on one used by Adriano Alvigini at his bakeshop in Savignone, Italy. To make the bread, he uses a leaven that has been passed down through his family for generations. As a substitute, we made a type of starter known as a sponge, a yeast and flour mixture that's fermented overnight to give the bread depth of flavor.

- 1/4 tsp. active dry yeast
- 6 cups bread flour
- 3 tbsp. fennel seeds
- 10 tbsp. sugar
- 13 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 2 1/4 cups golden raisins
- 1 cup candied orange peel (see page 94)
- 1/3 cup pine nuts

**1.** Heat 1 1/2 cups water to 115° in a 1-qt. saucepan over high heat. In a medium bowl, stir together the water, yeast, and 2 1/2 cups of the flour to form the starter. Cover with plastic wrap, let sit at room temperature until bubbly and foamy, about 4 hours, then refrigerate overnight. The starter will keep for up to 3 days.

**2.** Put fennel seeds into a bowl; pour in enough boiling water to cover. Let fennel seeds soften for 20 minutes. Drain and set aside.

**3.** Transfer reserved starter to the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook. Add sugar and 1/2 cup tepid water; mix on low speed to combine. Add the remaining flour in 3 additions; mix until a dough forms, then continue to mix on low speed for 5 minutes. Add a third of the butter and mix until incorporated, about 5 minutes. Repeat with remaining butter in 2 more batches. Add fennel seeds, raisins, orange peel, and pine nuts and mix until incorporated.

**4.** Turn dough out onto a floured surface, form into a ball, and cut into 4 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a ball; divide balls between 2 parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Let rise, uncovered, in a warm place until doubled in size, 2-2 1/2 hours.

**5.** Heat oven to 350°. Using a razor blade, cut a triangle on top of each dough ball. Bake until golden, about 50 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes before slicing.





## PANDOLCE

of pandolce: butter, flour, raisins, and pieces of candied orange peel, glimmering like gems.

Adriano gives us a warm but quick hello. Standing before the table and tying an apron around his waist, he explains that, like most professional bakers in Italy around Christmastime, he's been working nonstop since November. He's just spent two weeks at a commercial bakery in Perugia, a couple of hundred miles south of here, making mountains of cookies, torrone (nougat), and chocolate sculptures for the holidays. Then he rushed back to work for a week at another bakery in nearby Voltri. Now, he's finally home to rest.

I got to know Adriano and Harriet three years ago, when I first became obsessed with learning about the pandolce of my Schenone ancestors, who emigrated from Liguria at the turn of the

mountains and rural villages. You can't tell the story of pandolce without those mountains, where Adriano and Harriet live; this is where home bakers have been making the bread each Christmas for centuries. And you can't tell it without the city of Genoa, where the round, raisin-speckled loaves fill pastry shop windows and display cases this time of year. The bread's flavorings—candied fruit, raisins, orange blossom water, to name a few—are the legacy of the spice trade that flourished between Europe and the Arab world during the Middle Ages, when Genoa was the seat of a powerful maritime empire and East-West trade center.

Today Genoa is fringed by a major industrial port, but the city still has an ancient soul. Its historic center is Europe's largest medieval district: a fascinating maze of narrow stone streets

other dishes: pesto, focaccia, and an amazing repertoire of savory pies, called torte, made of vegetables bound together with eggs and cheese. After I conquered ravioli, I went on to reclaim these Genoan classics, as well.

But pandolce—well, that one vexed me. I knew that Adalgiza used to make it each Christmas; she began with a circle of flour and yeast and then let her grandchildren add the raisins, nuts, and candied fruit. Over the decades, though, American-style frosted layer cakes took over the Schenone holiday table. After Adalgiza and her daughters had passed away, we realized that no one knew how to make pandolce anymore.

Finding a recipe in Genoa was easy enough. Back in my New Jersey kitchen, the smell from my oven was buttery and intoxi-



last century. A trusted Genoan friend and food expert told me that Adriano was one of the best pastry chefs around. When I met him for lunch, Adriano spoke passionately about the bread. He'd be happy to teach me how to make it, he said, but it was July, and one does not traditionally make pandolce in July. I'd have to come back at Christmastime.

PANDOLCE BELONGS TO A LARGE family of European feast breads that some scholars believe originated during the Middle Ages; its name means sweet bread, though it doesn't taste sweet by today's standards. In Genoa, I quickly learned not to confuse (or even compare) pandolce with the tall, eggy panettone from Milan, the dense panforte of Tuscany, the fluffy pandoro of Verona. Pandolce belongs to Liguria, that sliver of a region that begins just east of the French Riviera and arcs across the coast toward Tuscany. A few miles inland, Liguria climbs steeply to the sky in a series of wooded



dotted with trattorias and food shops, like the elegant 200-year-old Pietro Romanengo, a confectionery that exudes history, with platters of candied oranges and chestnuts, bottles of rose petal syrup, and bins of sugared violets and candied fruit. The candying of fruit was originally an Arab technique, and when done correctly it produces a delicate texture and retains the flavor of real fruit. When I first sampled Romanengo's candied citron and orange peel, I suddenly comprehended the intentions of all of the fruitcakes I had never understood.

I started visiting Genoa years ago, when I was searching for the authentic ravioli recipe of my great-grandmother Adalgiza, who was born here in the 1870s. Surely I was looking for other things as well: a connection to the past; communion with a beautiful place; and yes, perhaps happiness, too. Along the way, I fell for Liguria, and for the legends of my great-grandparents' courtship—a love affair involving mandolin serenades under the window. I fell for the region's



cating, and the result resembled what I'd seen in many Genoan bakeries. I proudly sent one of my loaves to my father's 85-year-old cousin Catherine to find out how it compared with the pandolce of her memory.

"It was wonderful," she told me over the phone a few days later. "We fought over the last piece." Then she paused. "But it was nothing like Adalgiza's pandolce," she said, using the Genoan dialect. "Hers was tall and lighter. Yours is low and dense. No. That's not her pandolce."

Little did I know that I'd fallen straight into a controversy that has long surrounded this culinary icon. In fact, two versions of pandolce exist: there's pandolce alto, or "high" pandolce, and pandolce basso, or "low". The high one is risen with yeast and tastes like a

**Above, from left, Harriet Metcalf at her home in Savignone; Christmas decoration on via Garibaldi in Genoa; the baristas of Caffè Mangini in Genoa, where pandolce is served year-round.**



## PANDOLCE

noble relative of raisin bread. The low one doesn't call for yeast and is crumbly like a scone. In Genoa, the low version is more widely sold, but the best bakeries offer both side by side, and, across the region, a long-running argument endures among families and professional bakers as to which is the oldest, the best, the truest.

Conflicting claims of authenticity abound. The 1863 book *La Cuciniera Genovese*, the earliest known volume on Genoan cooking, gives two recipes for pandolce: one is for the yeast-risen version, and the other is called a "quick version"; this suggests that alto is the original. On the other hand, the historian Paolo Lingua wrote in 1989 that supporters of the basso version argue that it's the more primitive because it is less leavened and resembles other "low" pas-



tries of the Middle Ages. No definitive proof has emerged to end the debate, but I believe that alto is the real version. That's what Adalgiza made, and that is what has brought me back to Genoa.

IN ADRIANO'S BAKERY CABIN, I watch him slowly pour a stream of sugared water into the center of a mound of flour, gradually mixing the two together with his fingers to create a pastelike dough. In a moment, he will add fennel seeds, candied orange, sultana raisins, and pine nuts, but not until he's incorporated the star ingredient, which sits on the counter swaddled like a baby in a white towel. It is Adriano's living, breathing *lievito madre*, "mother yeast," which is essentially a sourdough starter, also called leaven. Harriet has been feeding the leaven—which, when unwrapped, looks like a piece of springy dough—steady refreshments of flour for the past week, so now it is vigorous and strong like an athlete, ready for a race.

Adriano explains that a natural leaven is harder to use than a packet of commercial yeast is, but artisans love it because it gives a superior crust and crumb and a more complex flavor. As Adriano works a portion of the leaven into the dough, he shares his own origins theory: pandolce basso can't be the original, he believes, because it contains baking powder, a modern ingredient. He says that pandolce came from the mountains, where women once did their home baking using natural leaven, reserving a piece for the next baking session so that the mother yeast would go on and on, becoming more flavorful over time. During the holidays, they'd embellish their daily bread with raisins, nuts, and honey. Adriano's version is based on that tradition; his leaven, passed down through his family, is more than a hundred years old. He takes it with him to his baking jobs the way a chef carries around a favorite knife.

After the leaven is incorporated, Adriano massages a voluptuous quantity of butter into the dough and continues to work it vigorously for 40 biceps-pumping minutes. Then Harriet steps up to the table, takes half the dough, and starts kneading as well. Working side by side, they talk about the future, about how they'll make their pandolce alto at the bakery they plan to open soon, in the stable of an old estate nearby that they're preparing to purchase. "We want to bring back the old recipes," Adriano says, smacking the dough against the table. Then he works in the raisins, nuts, and fruit, divides the dough, and, moving his hand in a fluid circular motion, forms eight perfectly round pandolce loaves. He leaves them on the table to let them rest overnight.

The next day, Penny and I return. The breads have risen, and Adriano uses a long paddle to place them deep inside the hot oven. An hour later they emerge, exuding a warm, buttery aroma. Adriano takes one of the breads, saws carefully through the crust, and hands us each a piece. We bite through the crunchy exterior, the delicate crumb, the bits of bright fruit. It is a rapturous bread, full of flavor and beauty.

Before we go, Adriano gives me two loaves to take home. Then he hands me a small plastic bag containing a bit of his leaven. In my kitchen, I will feed it American flour and water. My immigrant starter will change over time, and, I imagine, so will my pandolce. Will it be like Adalgiza's? It hardly matters. This is Adriano and Harriet's bread—alive with history, a love story, and hope for the future. I suspect it's the truest pandolce I'll ever find. 

## THE GUIDE

## GENOA

## WHERE TO STAY

**BENTLEY HOTEL** *via Corsica 4* (39/010/531-5111; [www.thi.it](http://www.thi.it)). Rates: \$450–\$525 double. This luxurious hotel, with its own spa, restaurant, and bar, is situated in a quiet residential neighborhood ten minutes from Genoa's old town center.

**BEST WESTERN HOTEL METROPOLI** *piazza Fontane Marose* (39/010/246-8888; [www.bestwestern.it](http://www.bestwestern.it)). Rates: \$120–\$175 double. Its simply appointed rooms are small, but its location is great for exploring the city.

## WHERE TO EAT

**CAFFÈ MANGINI** *piazza Corvetto* (39/010/564-013). This historic caffè in Genoa's old city exudes 19th-century splendor; it is the perfect place to pause for a piece of pandolce and an espresso.

**PASTICCERIA SANSEBASTIANO** *via Galeazzo Alessi 9r* (39/010/543-289). This traditional pastry shop, which serves an exemplary pandolce alto made from natural leaven, is more than worth the ten-minute walk from the city center.

**PASTICCERIA TAGLIAFICO** *via Galata 29r* (39/010/565-714; [www.pasticceriatagliafico.it](http://www.pasticceriatagliafico.it)). Sample excellent pandolce of both the "high" and "low" varieties, as well as other Genoan pastries, at this popular and centrally located pastry shop.

**PIETRO ROMANENGO** *via Soziglia 74r* (39/010/247-4574; [www.romanengo.com](http://www.romanengo.com)). At this 200-year-old confectionery in Genoa's old city, you can browse the shop's impressive selection of chocolates, sweets, and candied fruits.

**TRATTORIA SA PESTA** *via Giustiniani 16r* (39/010/246-8336). Dinner for two with drinks and tip: \$55. Traditional Genoan dishes anchor the menu at this casual restaurant, in the city's historic center: minestrone (vegetable soup flavored with pesto), torta bietole (a savory pie made with chard), and trofie (corkscrew-shaped pasta).



26 GENERATIONS



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THE QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE





# MOTHER SAUCE

THE ANCIENT ART OF THE SAUCIER IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THE KITCHENS OF PARIS AND BEYOND

BY JAMES PETERSON PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID BRABYN

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## FRENCH SAUCES

A GOOD SAUCE HAS ALWAYS been a badge of honor in the French kitchen, whether it's a glossy, wine-enriched bordelaise paired with tender filet mignon or a creamy béchamel baked into a hearty gratin. Call me a classicist: as a cooking instructor and writer, I've always appreciated how a beautifully executed sauce demonstrates not only a cook's skill and finesse but also a commitment to the old-

school principles of French gastronomy. Distilled from the essence of flavorful stocks and layered with the aromas of herbs and caramelized vegetables, classic sauces accentuate and elevate even the simplest of dishes.

Nowadays, many cooks and chefs in the United States—where preferences often lean toward grilled, seared, or roasted foods served with simple pan gravies—have strayed from the old standbys; the hollandaise that

JAMES PETERSON is the author of more than a dozen cookbooks, including *Sauces* (Wiley, 1991), a new edition of which was printed this year, and *Cooking* (Ten Speed Press, 2007), which won a James Beard Award.

arrives atop our eggs benedict is one of the few that we find on menus with any regularity. But there is one family of classic sauces to which chefs are as faithful as ever: the meat stock-based brown sauces, or sauces brunes.

Enter the kitchen of any restaurant rooted in the classic technique, or even the home of a serious French cook, and you'll likely encounter a pot of veal bone stock, infused with the scent of thyme, parsley, leeks, onions, and carrots, simmering down to a concentrated essence, a thick, garnet-colored base sauce known as demi-glace. Both sweet and salty and brimming with intense meatiness, demi-glace (the name means half-glaze, which succinctly captures the

sauce's unctuous yet pure character) is the foundation of all classic brown sauces, and over the past few hundred years it has become one of the most essential elements in Western cooking. A spoonful of this reduction, combined with other ingredients, enables a cook to build countless derivative sauces to pair with meats, fish, and vegetables, from a tangy charcutière sauce, with gherkins, mustard, and white wine, to a truffle-scented financière, fortified with madeira wine.

I first learned to make demi-glace in the 1970s, when I was a student at the Cordon Bleu cooking school in Paris. Our bible there was *Le guide culinaire*, the classic 1903 tome by the legendary French cookery writer Auguste

Escoffier, who codified the rules for sauce making and other aspects of classic French cuisine. Escoffier identified five "mother sauces"—tomato, velouté (white stock thickened with a flour-butter paste, called roux), béchamel (milk and roux), hollandaise (an emulsion of butter, egg, and lemon juice), and sauce espagnole, a roux-thickened brown sauce—from which a vast array of "petite", or derivative, sauces could be made. What distinguishes a fine brown sauce is a deeply flavorful stock. The words of Escoffier, quoted ad infinitum by my instructors at the Cordon Bleu, still ring in my ears: "It is to the production of perfect stocks that the sauce cook should devote himself."

I took that message to heart. To this day, I still make a batch of demi-glace every few months to store in my refrigerator or freezer at home, patiently simmering veal bones with (continued on page 51)

**Facing page, a student at Le Ferrandi culinary school in Paris. Previous page, demi-glace in a spoon.**

## HOW TO MAKE A BOUQUET GARNI

"An experienced saucier uses herbs at several stages of the sauce-making process," writes author James Peterson in his seminal book *Sauces: Classical and Contemporary Sauce Making*. A bouquet garni—a neatly tied bundle of parsley, thyme, and bay leaf—adds a layer of herbaceous flavor to stocks, the first stage of preparing a sauce. Here's how it's made at Le Ferrandi, the acclaimed cooking school in Paris.

- 2 outer green leek leaves
- 15 flat-leaf parsley stems
- 2 fresh thyme stems or sprigs
- 2 dried bay leaves

A bouquet garni is usually made by tying together herbs with kitchen twine or enclosing them in cheesecloth. At Le Ferrandi, students take a more resourceful approach, using items that are usually thrown away: the tough outer leaves of leeks, which become the wrapper, and the fresh stems or sprigs of flat-

leaf parsley and thyme. Trim the ends off the leek leaves to make two 7"-long pieces. Place parsley,



thyme, and bay leaves in between the leek leaves (left). Using an 18"-long piece of kitchen twine, wrap

tightly to form a packet (left). Trim excess twine (below); add to sauce or stock.







Adrien  
Anzenberger







## FRENCH SAUCES

## HOW TO MAKE DEMI-GLACE

This rich, concentrated sauce is well worth the time it takes to make it. It can be swirled into soups and stews to lend complex flavor or used as a base for countless sauces, including the ones featured on the pages that follow. Yields two cups.

- 10 lbs. veal bones
- 3 carrots, roughly chopped
- 2 onions, roughly chopped
- 1 white part of leek, roughly chopped (optional)
- 1 bouquet garni (see page 46)
- 1 6-oz. can tomato paste

## ROAST THE BONES

Browning bones and vegetables in a roasting pan in the oven before combining them in a pot with water gives this stock a more pronounced flavor and deeper color. Veal bones



have more collagen than beef bones; simmering the bones transforms the collagen into gelatin, which makes for a thicker, richer stock. Heat oven to 500°. Put bones into a roasting pan large enough to hold them in a single layer and roast until lightly browned, about 1-1/2 hours. Add carrots, onions, and leeks to the pan and spread them evenly around the bones. At Le Ferrandi and many French restaurants, they leave celery out of their stocks, as they believe it to be too assertive. Roast the bones



and vegetables until they are deeply browned, about 45 minutes more (facing page).

## DEGLAZE THE PAN

Transfer bones and vegetables to a 15-20-qt. stockpot (below, left). Place roasting pan over 2 burners on stove over medium heat. Add 3 cups water to pan; begin scraping up any browned bits from bottom of pan with a wooden spoon. These caramelized morsels of concentrated juice, called the *fond*—literally, the foundation—will enrich the stock. Simmer for 3 minutes; transfer liquid to pot of bones. Add bouquet garni and tomato paste (below). The paste will give the stock a deeper fla-



vor and color. Cover bones with 6-8 qts. cold water; set pot over medium-high heat. Starting with cold water encourages the proteins and fats contained in bones to rise to the surface in large pieces, where they can be skimmed and discarded.

## SIMMER THE STOCK

When the first bubbles begin to appear on the surface of the liquid, reduce heat to medium-low and maintain a very gentle simmer; a bubble should rise to the surface about once per second. Simmering slowly prevents the fat and impurities from being churned back into the stock and clouding it. The strength and concentration of your demi-glace will be determined by

the length of time the stock simmers. For the minimum amount of extraction, it should simmer for at least 6-8 hours, but we recommend



12-24 hours for a richer, more gelatinous sauce. Check every few hours and add more cold water if necessary so that bones are always covered.

## SKIM THE FAT

Skim fatty froth (above) from surface of stock with a ladle every 5-10 minutes during first hour of cooking to prevent it from clouding stock. After first hour, skim the stock every 30 minutes or so.

may be reused to make a lighter, secondary stock with fresh vegetables and aromatics, called *remouillage* and used for sauces and soups. The stock should yield 4-5 qts. If storing stock for another use, you can cool it quickly by placing the pot in a sink half filled with ice water. Once it's cooled, skim the surface again to remove any fat. Transfer the stock you don't plan to use right away to storage containers and refrigerate. Stock will keep refrigerated for up to



1 week or frozen for up to 6 months. To transform the stock into demi-glace, proceed to next step.

## STRAIN THE STOCK

When the stock is ready (below), set a chinois (a fine-mesh conical sieve) or a fine metal sieve over a clean 8-qt. pot. Strain stock through sieve into the pot. Tap edge of sieve



with a wooden spoon to loosen any solids that impede the straining of the stock, but do not force liquid through. Discard bones, vegetables, and bouquet garni. The bones

## REDUCE THE SAUCE

Traditionally, the stock for demi-glace was thickened with a roux, but modern chefs have shunned thickeners in favor of reducing stock to a pure, more syrupy consistency (below). Simmer stock over medium-high heat, skimming occasionally, for 4-5 hours until reduced to 2 cups. Refrigerate for up to 2 weeks or freeze for up to 6 months.





## FILET MIGNON WITH BORDELAISE SAUCE

This luscious, wine-enriched sauce is often paired with a hanger steak, a shell steak, or a tender filet mignon (as shown at right). Though this sauce is traditionally served with a dollop of beef marrow, we think it is just as delicious finished with a garnish of chopped fresh parsley and rosemary. Serves four.

- 1 cup red wine
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 shallots, finely diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 6 tbsp. demi-glace (see page 49)
- 4 6-oz. filet mignons
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 tbsp. chilled unsalted butter, diced
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme

### MAKE THE SAUCE

In a 2-qt. saucepan, combine wine (below), thyme, shallots, and bay leaf. Reduce wine over medium-high heat until almost completely



evaporated. If using a gas stove, tip pan to ignite wine (above right); this will aid in evaporation. Discard the thyme and bay leaf; stir in demi-glace. Cover, remove from heat, and set aside.

### PREPARE THE FILETS

Heat oven to 500°. Season filets with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a 10" skillet over high heat.

Sear steaks, flipping once, until browned, 4–5 minutes. Transfer skillet to oven; roast until steaks are medium rare, 4–5 minutes. Place steaks on a plate; let rest.



### SAUCE THE STEAK

Return saucepan to medium heat. Whisk in butter. Remove saucepan from heat; stir in parsley and season sauce with salt and pepper. Transfer steaks to cutting board; add juices from plate to pan and



stir. Spoon 2 tbsp. sauce onto each of 4 plates. Slice steak into 1/4"-thick slices; divide between plates. Sprinkle with rosemary and thyme; drizzle each steak with 1 tbsp. sauce. Serve with baby lettuces, if you like. Yields 3/4 cup sauce.







(continued from page 46) aromatic vegetables and a bouquet garni over the course of an entire day. Then, when a dish I'm making calls for one brown sauce or another, I simply prepare the main ingredients and swirl in demi-glace for body, sheen, and a deep, meaty taste. Over the years, I've followed the lead of French home cooks I know and also use demi-glace to fortify pan juices and lend depth to stews, braises, risottos, and other dishes.

Thirty years after my stint at the Cordon Bleu, I was asked to update a book I'd written about sauces back in 1991, and I became curious as to how cooking schools were teaching the next generation of *sauciers* about demi-glace and its derivative sauces. The world of food had changed considerably in two decades, having been influenced by the flourishing of international cuisines and the heightened interest in food science and technology, among other things. How were the

keepers of classical French sauce-making traditions faring in the here and now? Recently I returned to Paris and paid a visit to the École Supérieure de Cuisine Française, known familiarly as Le Ferrandi: a government-run culinary school that's regarded as the country's best. There, and in the kitchens

**W** A photo gallery of Le Ferrandi and all about skimming at [SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE116](http://SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE116)

and dining rooms of Paris at large, I found the art of sauce making to be thriving among a new guard of chefs and chefs-to-be.

LE FERRANDI occupies a drab-looking, five-story building in Paris's Montparnasse district. I arrived at the school on a bitterly cold day; students in their chef's whites were milling around in the courtyard, smoking cigarettes and talking. I went inside and followed a maze of corridors to the classroom of Eric Robert, the school's main kitchen instructor. I found (continued on page 54)

**At left, filet mignon with bordelaise sauce.**

## THE NEXT-BEST THING

Nothing beats the intense flavor and silky texture of a homemade demi-glace, but making one takes time: a full day or more of roasting bones, simmering stock, and reducing the sauce to its caramelized essence. There are, however, a few acceptable shortcuts. We experimented with several store-bought demi-glaces and found two versions—D'Artagnan's Veal Demi-Glace and Natural Classics DemiGlace—that work well in a pinch for making the sauces found in these pages. They have the requisite meaty, slightly sweet flavor and are made according to the same method many cooks use—essentially a large-scale version of the home-style technique described on page 49. Those two sauces don't contain preservatives or stabilizers and must be kept chilled or frozen until they're used. Most store-bought versions, however, such as Williams-Sonoma Demi-Glace de Veau (pictured right) or More Than Gourmet Demi-Glace de Veau Gold, are shelf stable but have a less subtle taste and a far thicker texture. Thickened with starches and heavy on salt, these sauces work the best when you use them as you would other concentrates, like tomato paste—that is, as a flavoring and coloring agent. We recommend using a tablespoon or so of these latter two to enrich stocks for braising or to add depth of flavor to rice dishes, particularly risottos. (See THE PANTRY, page 94, for sources for packaged demi-glaces.) —Hunter Lewis







Students at Le Ferrandi preparing steaks for lunch service at the the school's restaurant, Le Premier.







## FRENCH SAUCES

(continued from page 51) Robert presiding over a small group of students who were attending to a gigantic pot of veal stock simmering atop a stove, filling the air with the heavy, appetizing aroma of roasted meat.

This is where demi-glace begins: a stock of veal bones that have been browned in an oven with aromatic vegetables before being left to simmer and cook down slowly over the course of hours or days until the mixture develops an intensely savory flavor, a dark color, and a

gelatinous texture. Robert checked the flame under the pot; the simmer must always be low and slow, so that fats and impurities will rise gently to the top and can be skimmed off.

Robert led me to a nearby kitchen, where a group of students was standing wordlessly around a small copper pot containing a dark-colored sauce: a reduction of brown stock that had been strained and was now gently inching its way toward becoming a demi-glace. Robert dipped a spoon into the

glossy liquid and offered me a taste: the sauce was rich, with a concentrated beef flavor, but the texture was not yet thick and syrupy. "Not quite," Robert said, handing the spoon to a student.

At a set of stoves arrayed against one wall, other students were practicing techniques for a range of "petite" sauces. One young woman was preparing a bordelaise for a steak: she started by reducing red wine infused with thyme; then she whisked in a ladleful of demi-glace, at which point the wine reduction took on an appealing, luminous sheen. Another student was making a sauce chasseur, a reduction of white wine and sautéed button mushrooms that's enriched with demi-glace. At the first whiff of the simmering wine and mushrooms, I remembered the simple sauce chasseur I used to make with pork chops at my apartment in Paris by simply sautéing mushrooms in the same pan I used to cook the meat, then deglazing with white wine and adding demi-glace, which blended beautifully with the caramelized notes of the pan juices.

WATCHING THE students at Le Ferrandi reminded me of the fascinating ways in which the past is connected to the present in traditional French sauce making. The word *sauce* comes from *salsa*, the Latin word for salty, probably because Roman cooks were fond of saucing their meat with a briny paste of preserved fish. It wasn't until the Middle Ages, when cooks began simmering meats in liquid and using the resulting broth as a base for sauce, that the flavors of the main dish naturally matched those of the garnish (though they were still highly seasoned). The earliest brown sauces were made from this braising liquid, thickened with bread, an accompaniment not all that different from American gravy or the French version, *jus lié*.

By the 17th century, French sauces, and French cuisine as a whole, started coming into their own. The rich, round flavors we associate with so many classic sauces today owe to methods developed by French court cooks around that time. In a departure from the heavy use of spices such as cloves and other bold seasonings that European cooks had

## STUDENTS HOVERED WORDLESSLY AROUND A COPPER POT CONTAIN- ING A RICH REDUCTION OF BROWN STOCK, INCHING ITS WAY TOWARD BECOMING DEMI-GLACE

long employed to embellish meats, the courtly chefs of 17th-century France embraced the belief that sauces should taste of the food itself, and they started using herbs and vegetables to flavor meats and their juices more subtly.

Cooks soon adopted the practice of making stocks to augment those pan or roasting juices in order to yield more sauce. As the popularity of restaurants grew in France after the French Revolution, it became impractical to create separate sauces for each meat dish, so chefs began making large batches of stock that they could use as a base for any number of sauces. These were flavorful stocks indeed, made with prodigious amounts of meat. Over time, though, the use of meat for stock gave way

Facing page, from foreground, bordelaise sauce, charcutière sauce, and chasseur sauce.

## BASTIONS OF SAUCE

Paris is the finest city in the world in which to savor classic and contemporary French sauces—as a meal at any of the following restaurants, which I've come to love for their sauce-driven dishes, will prove. —J.P.

### BALZAR

49 rue des Écoles (33/1/4354-1367; [www.brasseriebalzar.com](http://www.brasseriebalzar.com)). The menu at this century-old Latin Quarter brasserie, with its brown banquettes, globe lights, and convivial atmosphere, is anchored by traditional meat dishes accompanied by some of the great French sauces: chateaubriand with béarnaise, for example, or pavé de boeuf with sauce au poivre, among other pleasures.

### L'EPI DUPIN

11 rue Dupin (33/1/4222-6456; [www.epidupin.com](http://www.epidupin.com)). The chef at this bistro, François Pasteau, is an alumnus of Le Ferrandi, and he has built on his classical education by creating innovative pairings, such as pork cheeks tandoori and roast veal kidney with spätzle. I go back for the lamb sweetbreads with langoustine sauce.

### MOISSONNIER

28 rue Fosses-St-Bernard (33/1/4329-8765). This 46-year-old bouchon (Lyon-style bistro) seems frozen in time; all the better for savoring classic preparations

like hanger steak, with a perfectly executed bordelaise, or tripe in sauce gribiche (made with eggs, oil, onions, and cornichons).

### LE PREMIER

At the *École Supérieure de la Cuisine Française (Le Ferrandi)*, 28 rue de l'Abbé Grégoire (33/1/4954-2800; [www.egf.ccip.fr/escflenglish](http://www.egf.ccip.fr/escflenglish)). Although the restaurant on the first floor of Paris's best cooking school may look a bit stodgy, the sauces taste anything but. Prepared and served by students, the fare ranks with that of the city's best bistros, and the menu changes daily. My favorite entrée: guinea hen with morel sauce.

### ZE KITCHEN GALERIE

4 rue des Grands Augustins (33/1/4432-0032; [www.zekitchen.galerie.fr](http://www.zekitchen.galerie.fr)). Chef William Ledeuil, an alumnus of Le Ferrandi, riffs on classic brown sauces by integrating them with Southeast Asian ingredients like ginger, tamarind, star anise, and coconut milk. I'm partial to the sautéed beef served in a pool of beef bouillon scented with Thai basil.









## BY THE BOOK

In his 1903 landmark book *Le guide culinaire*, the French gastronome Auguste Escoffier outlined more than 50 whimsically named brown sauces that cooks can make by incorporating a base sauce like demi-glace with other ingredients. And in 1914, a Parisian named Louis Saulnier published the Cliff Notes-style version, a pocket-size book called *Le répertoire de la cuisine*. I still rely on my old, Scotch-taped English-language version of that book to remind me what, besides demi-glace, goes into these classic sauces (of which a few of my favorites are listed below). —J.P.

**BERCY:** chopped shallots, pepper, white wine, butter, beef marrow, and parsley

**CHATEAUBRIAND:** shallots, thyme, bay leaves, mushrooms, and white wine

**DIANE:** sauce poivrade (see below), with cream

**FINES-HERBES:** white wine, fines herbes (tarragon, chives, chervil, parsley, and thyme), and lemon juice

**MOELLE:** bordelaise sauce (see page 50), with white wine instead of red

**POIVRADE:** mirepoix (onions, celery, and carrots), herbs, and vinegar

**REFORME:** half demi-glace, half poivrade

**ROBERT:** onions, white wine, vinegar, pepper, and mustard (add gherkins to make sauce charcutière)

to the more economical practice of using bones, which impart a meaty flavor after a long simmer.

Beginning in the 17th century, cooks took to thickening their stock reductions with a cooked paste of flour and butter, called a roux. That was how Escoffier made brown sauce in the early 1900s, and that is how I learned to do it when I was in cooking school. The method Escoffier set forth called for enriching veal or beef stock with tomatoes, thickening it with a roux, and reducing that mixture so that it became the mother sauce known as sauce espagnole (the name derives from the Spanish hams that were once used to flavor stock in French royal kitchens). This sauce, in turn, could be used as is to create other sauces, or, better yet, it could be further reduced—"taken to the extreme limit of perfection", in Escoffier's words—into a demi-glace.

In the 1970s, however, sauce making took a major turn. When I lived in Paris, I tasted that transformation firsthand: while I was still being taught to make demi-glace thickened with roux, at restaurants around town I tasted brown sauces that were at once more syrupy and intense than the ones I was making and yet lighter on the palate. The chefs who had created these sauces, proponents of the then emerging approach to cooking known as nouvelle cuisine, had banished roux from their sauces: because of the natural gelatin a bone stock contained, it could, over the course of a long and slow process of reduction, become a luscious and full-bodied base sauce that didn't need to be thickened with flour. Instead, they whisked butter or cream into their sauces before serving—a technique,

**Clockwise from top left: students at Le Ferrandi; the mise-en-place for chasseur sauce; making a demi-glace; pork noisettes with charcutière sauce.**







## PORK NOISETTES WITH CHARCUTIÈRE SAUCE

Flavored with white wine, mustard, onion, and sliced cornichons, this tangy sauce pairs well with sautéed pork dishes because it cuts through their richness. Charcutière sauce, a popular staple at Parisian bistros, is even more delicious when made in the skillet used for sautéing the pork because the caramelized juices from the bottom of the pan boost the sauce's flavor and color. (The finished dish is pictured on facing page, bottom.) Serves four.

- 6 *tblsp. extra-virgin olive oil*
- 12 *1/2"-thick slices pork tenderloin*
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste*
- 1/2 small onion, finely chopped*
- 1 cup white wine*
- 6 tblsp. demi-glaze (see page 49)*
- 2 tblsp. chilled unsalted butter, diced*
- 1 tblsp. dijon mustard*
- 6 cornichons, julienned*

### SEAR THE PORK

Heat 2 *tblsp.* oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Rub pork with 2 *tblsp.* oil; season with salt and pepper. Add half the pork to skillet; cook, flipping once, until



lightly browned and just cooked through, about 5 minutes total. Divide pork between 2 plates, overlapping 3 pieces on each plate. Repeat with remaining olive oil and pork. Cover plates loosely with foil; set aside in a warm place to let rest while you finish the sauce.

### MAKE THE SAUCE

Return skillet, with brown bits from pork still in it, to medium-high heat. Add onions; cook, stirring and scraping occasionally with a wooden spoon (below), until onions begin to brown, about 3 minutes. Add wine;



simmer until reduced to about one-fourth its original volume, about 5 minutes. Add demi-glaze; whisk in butter until smooth. Remove skillet from heat; stir in mustard and cornichons. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon 2–3 *tblsp.* sauce over pork. Garnish plates with sautéed sliced red cabbage, if you like. Yields about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sauce.





## FRENCH SAUCES

called *monter au beurre*, that many restaurants have since adopted.

As I wandered through the halls of Le Ferrandi, peeking into classes where students were honing their sauce-making skills, I didn't see any evidence of roux. So, when I met with Christian Foucher, the school's director of programming, I asked him whether his students were still taught to make classic brown sauces à l'Escoffier. He explained that sauce making has evolved toward greater efficiency and purity over the years. When he was a cook at the classic, 62-year-old Paris restaurant Taillevent, he said, he made demi-glace by sprinkling flour over roasted bones and vegetables, then returning them to the oven to brown some more and create a roux. Then those bones and vegetables were used to make stock, and, after straining, even more vegetables and herbs were added to make espagnole, which was strained and simmered down to demi-glace. Nowadays, students simply simmer down their strained stock, continually skimming off the froth and fat, until the liquid has reduced to about a

twentieth of its original volume. In essence, they skip the espagnole step. "Today everything is at a quicker pace," Foucher said.

Before I left Le Ferrandi, I asked Benoît Nicolas, a professor of first-year students, whether the instructors at the school had opened the doors to other sauce-making innovations, especially in light of all the foams and emulsions that avant-garde chefs have been proffering in recent years. Nicolas told me that, indeed, students start out eager to break away from the classics, but ultimately they're drawn to the time-honored techniques of Escoffier—so much so, in fact, that it often takes steering and encouragement for them to break into fresh territory.

OVER THE COURSE of my next few days in Paris, I decided to sample brown sauces around town, from hearty dishes like hanger steak with bordelaise at workingmen's bistros to fancier restaurants where chefs have been experimenting with demi-glace. One of the more interesting

sauces I tasted was at Ze Kitchen Galerie, a seven-year-old restaurant on the Left Bank owned by a celebrated alumnus of Le Ferrandi, William Ledeuil. The chef recruits the ingredients of South-

## STUDENTS START OUT EAGER TO BREAK AWAY FROM THE CLASSICS, BUT ULTIMATELY THEY'RE DRAWN TO THE TIME-HONORED TECHNIQUES OF CLASSIC SAUCE MAKING

east Asia and puts them in a French context. My shell steak, for example, came with a sauce flavored with Thai basil, lemongrass and tamarind, but was possessed of a concentrated meatiness that evoked a traditional demi-glace.

Before leaving Paris, I had lunch at the eponymous flagship restaurant of Guy Savoy, the celebrated Parisian chef. Savoy himself was there that day, and, after my meal, I talked with him about his approach to sauce making. Savoy explained that he makes not one demi-glace but many (all without flour); instead of beginning with a veal stock for all his brown sauces, he makes stock from whatever animal will be the centerpiece of a given entrée—harking back to *cuisine à l'ancienne*, in which sauces were derived from a meat's braising juices.

I got on a plane the next day and arrived home tired but with mind and body well fed. Yes, sauce making had changed in the years since I'd been schooled in the art, but it had done so slowly, like a rich stock cooking down. Before going to bed that night, I took a small batch of demi-glace from the freezer; then I fell asleep thinking of all the things I might make for the next evening's dinner. 🍴

**Facing page, veal paillards with chasseur sauce.**

## VEAL PAILLARDS WITH CHASSEUR SAUCE

This white wine-based "hunter's sauce" has a zingy flavor that marries well with mild-tasting meats and lean cuts, such as chicken or veal "paillards" (as shown on facing page)—cutlets that have been pounded until they're very thin. Serves four.

- 8 1/4"-thick veal cutlets (about 1 1/2 lbs.)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 tbsp. chilled unsalted butter, diced
- 8 button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1/4 cup brandy
- 5 tbsp. demi-glace (see page 49)
- 2 tbsp. minced tarragon



### SEAR THE CUTLETS

Season veal with salt and pepper. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Working in 2 batches, cook half of

the cutlets until edges are lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook for 1 minute more. Divide veal between 2 plates; cover with foil. Wipe out skillet; repeat with remaining oil and cutlets.

### MAKE THE SAUCE

Return skillet to medium-high heat; heat 2 tbsp. butter. Add mushrooms and shallots; cook until browned, about 3–4 minutes. Remove from heat; add wine and brandy. Cook until reduced by half, 2–3 minutes. Whisk in demi-glace, remaining butter

(right), and tarragon. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon 2–4 tbsp. sauce over veal; garnish with torn tarragon, if you like. Yields about 1 cup sauce.













# THEY REMEMBER HOME

FOR A GROUP OF IRAQI REFUGEES IN LEBANON, COOKING IS A LIFELINE

BY ANNIA CIEZADLO PHOTOGRAPHS BY PENNY DE LOS SANTOS

A group of refugees from Iraq, including Ahmed Jaafar (second from left), Jassim Jaafar (third from left), Ali Shamkhi (second from right), and Azziz Ali (right), gather for a home-cooked dinner in Beirut, Lebanon.



## IRAQI HOME COOKING

**T**HE MOST STRESSFUL AND dangerous period of my life was the seven and a half months that I spent in Iraq reporting on the war there in 2003 and 2004, and ever since then I've been burning to go back. Because it's still not safe in Iraq for a freelance journalist like me, I satisfy this irrational yearning by seeking out Iraqi food wherever I can: tender okra slow-cooked in thick tomato sauce; beef and lamb layered with tomatoes, eggplant, and green peppers; lush stews of tomatoes and apricots poured over yellow rice, to name a few. These cravings led me to

al-Najaf al-Ashraf, the only Iraqi restaurant in Beirut, Lebanon, which I now call home. That is where I met Ali Shamkhi.

The first time I saw Ali, he was sitting at a table nuzzling a bowl of golden yellow tashreeb dijaaj, an aromatic dish of broth-soaked bread and slow-cooked chicken that has been traced all the way back to ancient Mesopotamia. Khubuz al-tannour, the thick, wheaty Iraqi flat bread baked in a *tannour*, the Sumerian stove still used to this day in Iraq, is broken into pieces and drowned in a rich stew of chicken that has been simmered with onions and bahar asfar (a spice blend made of a variety of ingredients, including cardamom, cumin, and turmeric). In the end, the meat is so tender you can pull it off the bone with the bread before stuffing it all in your mouth, which is what Ali was doing when I met him. Iraq has had many great civilizations, he told me between bites: the Sumerians, the Akkadians, the Babylonians, and others, all layered one on top of the other like so many ingredients in a traditional Iraqi stew.

You don't have to tell me about Iraqi civilization, I told him. I've been there. I liked it, especially the food.

I should have known better than to say that: being an Iraqi, he immediately invited me to his home for dinner.

THE NEXT DAY, I WAS IN THE cramped kitchen of Ali's apartment in the Hayy el-Selloum neighborhood of Beirut, watching him wash chicken with the help of his two roommates, Jassim and Ahmed Jaafar. He was going to make tashreeb, the dish I'd seen him eating when we met. As he held each piece of chicken under running water, Ali whispered "Bismillah [In the name of God]"—a small prayer of thanks for this flesh, so recently alive, that we were about to eat.

In a blackened aluminum skillet missing its handle, Ali seared each thigh the way his mother taught him, skin side first, pressing down on the meat with a slotted spoon—"just enough to release the fragrance," he said. Then he paused, closed his eyes, and inhaled a deep, hungry lungful of home. "The scent of tashreeb," (continued on page 66)

ANNIA CIEZADLO has reported from Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon for the New Republic, the Christian Science Monitor, and other publications. She is currently writing *Day of Honey*, a memoir about food and war in the Middle East, to be published by the Free Press. This is her first article for SAVEUR.

## RECIPE

**Kabset Baitenjan**

(Iraqi-Style Beef and Vegetable Stew)

SERVES 6-8

This hearty stew (facing page) of fried and simmered beef and vegetables gets its distinct flavor from an aromatic spice mixture composed of cardamom, allspice, cinnamon, and other spices. Our homemade version yields two tablespoons; curry powder can be substituted. For hard-to-find ingredients, see THE PANTRY, page 94.

**FOR THE SPICE MIXTURE:**

- 1½ tsp. black peppercorns
- ½ tsp. cumin seeds
- ½ tsp. coriander seeds
- 2 white or green cardamom pods
- 2 whole allspice berries
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 chile de árbol
- ¾ tsp. dried rose petals (optional)
- ¼ tsp. grated nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ⅛ tsp. ground ginger
- ⅛ tsp. ground turmeric

**FOR THE STEW:**

- Canola oil for frying
- 1 lb. Italian eggplant, peeled and cut into ¾"-thick rounds
- 1 lb. waxy-style potatoes, peeled and cut into ½"-thick rounds
- 2 large beefsteak tomatoes, cored and cut into 1"-thick rounds
- 1 medium onion, sliced into ¾"-thick rounds
- 1 green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and quartered
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and quartered
- 1 lb. beef top round, trimmed and cut into 4" x ½" strips
- 1 clove garlic, roughly chopped
- ⅔ cup tomato paste
- 1 tbsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste

**1.** Make the spice mixture: In a skillet, toast peppercorns, cumin, coriander, cardamom, allspice, and cloves over medium heat until fragrant, about 4 minutes. Let cool; grind to a powder in a spice grinder along with chile and rose petals. Transfer spices to a bowl; stir in nutmeg, cinnamon, ginger, and turmeric. Set spice mixture aside.

**2.** Make the stew: Pour oil into a 6-qt. pot to a depth of 2". Heat over high heat until a deep-fry thermometer registers 360°. Working in batches, fry eggplant and potatoes until golden, turning, about 2 minutes; transfer to plates. Fry 1 sliced tomato for 15 seconds; drain. Fry onion until golden, about 90 seconds; drain. Fry peppers for 1 minute. Fry beef in batches until browned, about 30 seconds; transfer to a bowl to capture juices.

**3.** Transfer 3 tbsp. frying oil to a 2-qt. saucepan; place over medium-high heat. Add garlic; cook for 1 minute. Add tomato paste; cook until browned, 1-2 minutes. Stir in 1 cup water, salt, and reserved meat juices; set aside.

**4.** Heat oven to 350°. Beginning with raw tomato, layer vegetables and beef in a 6-qt. pot. Season each layer with salt to taste and spice mixture. Pour in tomato sauce; slide a spatula around pot to disperse sauce. Bring to a simmer; bake, covered, for 1 hour. Let rest for 30 minutes. Serve with rice.





Iraqi-style beef and vegetable stew.











## IRAQI HOME COOKING



Previous page, Ahmed (left) and Ali (right) prepare a dinner of tashreeb in their kitchen in Beirut. Above, Ali's cousin Azziz Ali, who emigrated from Karbala, Iraq, and works as a handyman, relaxes at Ali's apartment before dinner.

(continued from page 62) he said, waving his spoon in the air, "will drive you mad."

ALI IS A REFUGEE. OF THE 2.2 MILLION Iraqis who have fled to neighboring countries since the war in Iraq began, about 50,000—many of them single men like Ali and his roommates—have ended up here in Lebanon. Back home, in times of peace, their mothers (or, once they were married, their wives) would serve them plates heaped with tender beef or lamb and fragrant rice every day after work. Here in exile, however, men like Ali are long on appetite but short on women, so they cook for themselves.

"It's not usual for men to cook in Iraq," Ali said, "but we're in a strange country, and we have to familiarize ourselves with things we're not used to." In Beirut, these home-cooked meals do more than just nourish Ali and his friends. Iraqi cuisine keeps them whole, keeps their scattered world intact. The shared ritual of eating has turned these hungry, homesick men into a household.

Ali, Jassim, and Ahmed have been cooking together for four years. Ali, who was a truck driver in his hometown of Karbala, makes a living driving trucks and bulldozers at construction sites these days; Jassim and Ahmed work as house painters. Whoever gets back from work first each day goes to the local market, buys vegetables and meat, and starts dinner. The others pitch in when they get home, dividing the labor: one slices, one cooks, one cleans. Then other men, drawn by the smells of familiar dishes, arrive: a distant cousin of Ali's from Karbala, maybe, or the neighborhood's Iraqi barber, or fellow teammates from the local soccer team that is made up of Iraqi refugees. Iraqi, they assure me, rarely eat alone.

Among these exiles, Ali, tall and tanned and all of 28 years old, is the mother hen. During that first visit, he bustled around the kitchen, affectionately barking orders and making extravagant pronouncements: "I could cook a kharouf"—a whole lamb—"in one hour!" he said with a wave of his cigarette as he presided over the simmering tashreeb. Later, when the subject of Iraqi hospitality came up, he said, half seriously, "If we have a guest, we give them our own children. This is our way."

Jassim, 25, is the joker. Graceful as a cat, flirtatious, he clowning around in the kitchen, brandishing plates of food and pretending to be on a cooking show by imitating the clunky classical Arabic of Lebanese celebrity chefs. At 32, Ahmed is the oldest, the responsible one. He didn't kid around as much as Jassim or boast as much as Ali, but on the rare occasions when Ahmed said something, everyone else listened.

Through it all, Ali urged the others to pick up the pace. "Come on, Jassim!" he said, as Jassim sliced more eggplants, onions, and tomatoes. "Yallah, yaa roohi [Come on, my soul]!"

At 8:30, the electricity cut out for the fourth time that evening. Jassim lit a candle and set it carefully next to the sink. They continued their cooking by candlelight, the kitchen bathed in a buttery glow.

"Jassim, get me the water," commanded Ali, as he emptied a spoonful of spices over the chicken in the skillet. Jassim poured water into the pan. "Look at this tashreeb," he said, pleased. "Yaa aini [O my eyes]!"

OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS—June, July, and August—I visited the guys every few weeks. We would eat dinner on the floor, on a drop cloth made of plastic garbage bags. The men ate with the fingers of their right hands, expertly scooping up hunks of meat and rice and piloting the food into their mouths without dropping a morsel. They always gave me a spoon.

In Iraq, a typical meal for a guest might be kharouf, lamb roasted and layered atop an enormous oval platter of rice. Or dolma, a complex architecture of eggplant, tomatoes, green peppers, and grape leaves, stuffed with meat and rice and simmered together in a pot on top of lamb chops. Or pacha, a sheep's head stewed and served, like everything else in Iraq, with rice. But on these nights we ate the kind of food their mothers would have served them at home: bahmieh, a lamb and okra braise; kabset beitenjan, a stew of eggplant, tomatoes, and beef; and, of course, tashreeb.

Whenever stewed meat dishes were served, Ali would fish out the choicest hunks—great white gobs of fat dripping with sauce—and hand them to me, urging, "Eat, eat, it has flavor!" And it did; after cooking in a rich, spicy sauce for several hours, the fat was savory and delicious.

One evening toward the end of the summer, Ali told me why he had left Iraq. Not long after the American-led intervention in 2003, he said, Shiite militias took over Karbala. When he refused to sign up with them, gunmen came to his house and shot him at close range, just below his shoulder, in a not so subtle recruitment pitch: Join us, or next time we'll have better aim.

Instead of joining, he fled, leaving behind everything he knew—his job, his family, his home. He arrived in Beirut with little more than a suitcase and the hope of someday settling in Texas, where a friend from Karbala has lived since the first gulf war, in 1991. He doesn't know when he'll return to Iraq or when he will see his mother again. She is still in Karbala, and when Ali calls her, which is as often as he



## IRAQI HOME COOKING

can afford, the first thing he asks is "What's for dinner?"

"She might tell me, 'I am preparing rice and eggplants,'" Ali said, busying himself by turning over the chicken thighs, "so that's what we'll make here." At the thought of his mother, Ali grew quiet.

After dinner, over industrial-strength Iraqi tea, the guys peppered me with questions about Texas. Is Dallas a county, or is it a village? Would Ali be safe if he moved there? Do Americans respect people of other religions?

I asked Ali what he would eat if he made it to America. Would he try McDonald's? Puzzled, Ali appealed to Ahmed for help. "Mek Donalds?" he repeated, his tongue stumbling over the unfamiliar consonants. "What is that?"

WITH SEPTEMBER CAME THE NEWS: Ali had been accepted into a U.S. resettlement program for Iraqi refugees. He would be going to Texas in less than a month. The guys invited me to dinner to celebrate the news.

I arrived to find Ahmed slouched against the door frame in the living room, listening to a wistful-sounding Iraqi song on his cell phone. The customary pot of tashreeb was bubbling on the stove like a volcano. Ali took the lid off the stew and stood back theatrically, beckoning me over to appreciate its majesty. "Listen," he said, gesturing to Ahmed's phone. "The song says, 'I can't leave my parents.'" Ali began to sing along:

*I got used to unfamiliar places,  
But I still yearn to go back to you, Mother.  
I'm used to wandering around unfamiliar places.  
I'm staying up all night.  
I can't sleep....*

He turned the pot down to a simmer and lit a cigarette. "I already miss the guys," he said, stirring the tashreeb. "We've been living together for a long time, and they're good company." The men stared at the floor for a while. Ahmed and Jassim had applied for the resettlement program, too, but they didn't know whether they'd be accepted or when they'd see Ali again.

The next day, I had the three of them over for a Tex-Mex meal of chicken mole and quesadillas. I wanted them to taste the kind of food Ali would likely encounter in Texas. After dinner, Ali called his mother on his cell phone. After a few seconds, his face was aglow; she'd picked up. "Have you had dinner?" he asked eagerly. "What did you eat?"

As his mother spoke, Ali closed his eyes and smiled, picturing the meal his mother was describing, interrupting his reverie occasionally to prod her for more details. "And what else? What else?"

When he was finally off the phone, I asked, "So, what did she eat?" "Chicken, with dates and apples," he said. And we laughed, because we too were eating chicken.

Later, after the guys had gone, I thought about the phone calls I'd made to my own mother from Baghdad when I lived there and was feeling scared and far from home. I pictured Ali calling home to Iraq from Texas just as he had from Beirut, asking, "What's for dinner?" and cooking tashreeb in a yet another unfamiliar kitchen before sitting down to eat with another group of homesick refugees.

Ali, oh, Ali, I thought to myself. You've left your world behind once already; now you're about to do it again. Then I remembered something Ahmed had told me a few months earlier, over tashreeb. "When I eat this food," he said, "I feel like I'm home." 🐦



## RECIPE

**Tashreeb Dijaaj**

(Spiced Chicken and Chickpea Stew)

SERVES 4

This dish (above), sometimes called thareed, is similar to chicken curry. Instead of the spiced chicken and chickpea stew's being served over rice, though, it is ladled over torn-up pieces of flat bread. As the dish sits, the bread soaks up the fragrant liquid.

- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 6 cloves garlic
- 3 small onions, quartered
- 4 medium waxy-style potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tbsp. spice mixture (see page 62 for a recipe) or curry powder
- 1 tbsp. ground turmeric
- 1 tbsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 4 skinless chicken legs (about 1 lb.)
- 4 skinless chicken thighs (about 1 lb.)
- 1 19-oz. can chickpeas, drained
- 4 pieces khubuz al-tannour (Iraqi flat bread), naan, or pita (see page 94)
- 1 lemon, quartered
- 1 tbsp. dried sumac (see page 94; optional)

Heat oil in a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat. Add garlic, onions, potatoes, bay leaves, spice mixture, turmeric, and salt. Cook, stirring and scraping bottom of pot occasionally, until onions and potatoes are golden, about 10 minutes. Add chicken and 3 1/2 cups water; stir to combine. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat to medium, and simmer, uncovered, until chicken is tender and cooked through, 20-25 minutes. Add chickpeas; cook for 5 minutes more. Taste the stew and season with more salt, to taste. Line 4 bowls with torn pieces of the flat bread. Ladle stew over bread. Squeeze a wedge of lemon over each bowl and sprinkle with sumac.



# WITH GLASS

*Refreshing, refined, and eminently festive, true punch is a lost art worth reviving*

**A**LMOST TEN YEARS AGO, I fell into writing about cocktails. It began as a sideline to my job as an English professor, but before very long it had metastasized into a career—a thoroughly enjoyable one, to be sure, but not without its challenges. Spending so much of my time in the company of delightful drinks, I want to share them with friends, but after years' worth of parties given over to measuring, shaking, stirring, fumbling for ingredients, and, worst of all, never getting a chance to talk to anyone, I realized that I needed something that I could prepare in advance. It had to be dry and sophisticated and as refreshing as a cocktail but not, perhaps,

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# SES RAISED



Captain Radcliffe's punch, a spiced, citrus-infused white wine blend shored up with cognac.



## PUNCH

so immediately intoxicating. And, just as important, it had to have a good story attached to it. There was only one drink I knew that might fit the bill: punch.

Now, punch is one of those if-by-whiskey topics. If by punch you mean the anything-goes catchall favored at fraternity parties or the cloying mix of canned fruit juice and cheap beverage alcohol customarily ladled forth from cut glass at country club dances, it hardly bears considering. If, on the other hand, by punch you mean the social drink that, in its 18th-century heyday, fueled the European Enlightenment, a subtle and delightful blend of fine and often exotic liquors, softened with water, brightened with the freshly squeezed juices of citrus fruit, sweetened with pure cane sugar, and touched with rare spices—a drink assembled according to exacting formulae and shared by



kings and gentlemen, poets and adventurers—well, that's rather a different story, isn't it?

In fact, like the word *martini*, which once denoted a marriage of gin and vermouth and nothing else, and even *cocktail*, which at one time referred to a mixture of liquor, sugar, water or ice, and bitters, *punch* used to mean a specific drink, not a whole class of them: a balanced, potent, yet thoroughly quaffable mixture, more or less as I've detailed. As such, from the middle of the 17th century until the middle of the

*"There are indeed certain Liquors, which being APPLIED TO OUR PASSIONS, OR TO FIRE, PRODUCE EFFECTS THE VERY REVERSE OF THOSE PRODUCED BY WATER.... Among these the generous Liquor called Punch is one."* —Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones* (1749)

19th, the shared bowl of punch was the undisputed monarch of the kingdom of mixed drinks. It was with this august tradition in mind that I sought to bring punch back to the party—or to my own parties, in any event.

PUNCH WAS THE FIRST popular mixed drink to incorporate distilled spirits. Before its invention, people drank their drams straight or poured them into a mug of ale or a tankard of wine. But sometime in the early 1600s, the sailors and traders of the British East India Company either adapted one of the fashionable English refreshments of the day to suit ingredients they found in India, adopted a native Indian drink as their own, or invented something entirely new based on what was available on the spot. There's evidence for all three possibilities, none of it conclusive. The name *punch* is no help either, as it could have been taken just as easily from the Hindi *pāñch*, which means five (presumably from the number of ingredients the drink customarily contained), as it could from the English *puncheon*, the name for a large cask often used for storing wine.

In the beginning, punch was a simple mixture of five canonical ingredients: lemon or lime juice, sugar, water, "spice" (which could have been anything from nutmeg or tea to ambergris, a musky whale secretion now used only in perfume making), and, of course, liquor. Batavia arrack, a fiery but highly aromatic molasses-and-rice distillate imported from the

Dutch East Indies, was the preferred spirit, but Caribbean rum and French brandy were right behind it. The earliest known reference to the drink dates from 1632, appearing in a letter to an India-bound merchant from an English colleague, who strongly warned against drinking it (if punch has a fault, it's the ease with which one can absorb too much of it).

By the 1650s, punch had become a standard British sailor's drink, consumed on ship and shore whenever the ingredients were close at hand; one seafaring parson of the time recalled its flowing "like ditchwater" on a ship he served. By the 1690s, English poets were singing its praises, English lords were filling fountains with it, Dutchmen were drinking it, and Frenchmen were declaring it delicious. Yet, however wide its fame spread, it was still an English drink: as the French writer Alexandre Dumas later put it in his *Le grand dictionnaire de cuisine* (1873), "Our neighbors the English have a particular taste for punches."

Day and night, gentlemen and would-be gentlemen (and sometimes ladies, too) in London and across the British empire would gather in private homes and in "punch houses" as their designated punch maker (an office of some social importance) manipulated the tools of his trade: silver lemon strainers, elaborate nutmeg graters, elegant whalebone-handled

## RECIPE

## Captain Radcliffe's Punch

MAKES 3 QUARTS

This smooth-drinking white wine- and cognac-based punch (pictured on previous page) is inspired by one described in a poem by the 17th-century English army captain and courtier Alexander Radcliffe. As with many punches, this one tastes the best when chilled by a single large block of ice instead of fast-melting cubes, which water down the punch too quickly.

- 4 lemons
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 cups sweet white wine, preferably sauternes
- 1 750-ml bottle of brandy, preferably VSOP cognac
- 6 cups chilled water
- Freshly grated nutmeg

1. Using a peeler, peel lemons, taking off as little white pith as possible. Transfer peels to a heavy bowl; reserve lemons. Add sugar; use a muddler or a wooden spoon to vigorously crush sugar and peels together until the sugar turns faintly yellow and slushy (see "Mastering Muddling", page 74).

2. Juice the reserved lemons and add the juice to the bowl along with the peels. Stir until the sugar has dissolved completely. Set a fine-mesh sieve over a punch bowl; strain the lemon and sugar mixture into the punch bowl; discard solids. Stir in the wine and the brandy. Chill. To serve, stir in water and place a large block of ice (see "Holidays on Ice", page 75) in the bowl. Garnish with nutmeg.

Facing page, punschglühbowle, made with red wine and seville oranges.











## PUNCH

## RECIPE

**Punschglühbowl**

(Flaming Punch)

MAKES 3 QUARTS

The name of this flaming red wine punch translates from the German as punch glow bowl. This recipe is based on one in the 1905 collection *Coolers and Punches from the German Army's Maneuvers and Field Deployment*.

- 3 bottles light-bodied red wine, such as beaujolais
- 1 750-ml bottle arrack liquor, preferably Batavia-Arrack van Oosten (see page 94), or cachaça
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 seville orange (also called bitter or sour orange; see page 94), thinly sliced, seeds removed
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced, seeds removed

**1.** In a 6-qt. pot, bring red wine and arrack to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and stir in the sugar along with the orange and lemon slices. Simmer, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Transfer the punch to a heavy heatproof bowl. (A non-heatproof bowl may crack.)

**2.** Dip a small metal ladle into the hot punch; touch a lit match to the surface of the punch in the ladle to ignite it. Pour the flaming punch back into the bowl. Serve immediately so that the punch remains aflame in the glass.

ladles with an old shilling set into the cup for good luck. Once his work was done, the assembled merry-makers would drink glass after glass until they were drunk. The English-born poet Ebenezer Cook described arriving in the British colony of Maryland in 1708 and being met with the sight of "A herd of Planters on the ground, O'erwhelm'd with Punch". One could have witnessed a similar scene at any London punch house of the era, though one was just as likely to encounter heated political discussions, sallies of literary wit, and

a profusion of convivial talk.

If it was a hard-tipling age, it was also an inventive one, and Englishmen weren't content to leave the original, five-ingredient recipe alone. By the end of the 18th century, punch makers had learned to expand on that formula: forgoing mere lemon juice, for instance, in favor of a livelier mix of lemon juice and the juices of sweet and bitter (seville) oranges; favoring green tea and champagne over water; or replacing the sugar with a combination of fruit-flavored syrups and fancy liqueurs. What's more, a century of practice produced a repertoire of tricks and techniques for making better punch, from extracting the sweet

oil from lemon peels to mellowing the drink with milk, gelatin, or even porter. In short, punch was the first testing ground for the mixologist's art.

Like all arts, though, mixology evolved, and by the middle of the 19th century the only punches in day-to-day use were served by the glass, not the bowl. It was an industrious era, one that didn't look kindly on sitting around all afternoon with friends, ladling punch into yourself. The flowing bowl went into hiding, to be pulled out only for special occasions. Unfortunately, this meant that the master punch makers' secrets were all but lost.

ACCORDINGLY, WHEN I started trying to resurrect old punches, I didn't have much to go on; just my memories of riotous doings around the punch bowl that I'd read about in the novels of Fielding, Austen, Thackeray, and Dickens and a wad of enigmatic recipes gleaned from the back pages of various bartenders' guides from the late 19th century (by which time the cocktail and its small-bore kin had seized punch's crown, relegating it to back-of-the-book status).

My first attempts to fill the punch bowl were cavalier. I used the recipes as mere guidelines, changing things for convenience or cost and because I surely knew better than whatever mustachioed old gent wrote the recipe. Used to making cocktails, where dilution is a don't, I would cut back on the seemingly excessive amounts of

water the recipes called for. Not surprisingly, the result was chaos. I remember, dimly, one New Year's Eve when I made Philadelphia fish house punch—an 18th-century invention that was the house drink of an exclusive fishing club—for the first time, leaving in the copious amounts of rum and brandy but omitting most of the water. Fortunately, it was a house party out in the country, and nobody had to drive. Or walk, for that matter. On other occasions, rather than take the trouble to make the large block of ice that old recipes usually demand, I'd just dump in a bag or two of supermarket cubes, which would melt more or less instantly and render the punch watery and insipid. And I'd think nothing of using powdered nutmeg instead

**W** More punch recipes at  
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of grating it fresh, or substituting cheap bourbon for good cognac.

Eventually, though, I learned to place my faith in the punch makers of yore. Some of their methods were easy enough to adopt: making a large block of ice—which will float in the bowl and melt slowly, producing a stronger punch at the beginning of the party and a weaker one at the end (a wholly desirable outcome)—requires nothing more than a number of hours, a largish bowl or pot, and some empty space in the freezer. (See "Holidays on Ice", page 75.) Others necessitated a little rejiggering. Many old recipes include the instruction to use lumps of sugar to scrape the outer peel off a few

**Facing page, regent's punch, a lavish 19th-century invention that includes champagne, tea, and pineapple.**



*"I never saw a man so thoroughly enjoy himself* **AMID THE FRAGRANCE OF LEMON-PEEL AND SUGAR, THE ODOR OF BURNING RUM, AND THE STEAM OF BOILING WATER...as he stirred, and mixed, and tasted, and looked as if he were making, instead of punch, A FORTUNE FOR HIS FAMILY DOWN TO THE LATEST POSTERITY." —Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (1850)**



## PUNCH



*"[He] continued to drink, to make love, and to sing; AND, WINKING AND WAVING HIS GLASS GRACEFULLY TO HIS AUDIENCE, CHALLENGED ALL OR ANY TO COME IN AND TAKE A SHARE OF HIS PUNCH."* —William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (1847–48)

lemons, thus imbuing the sugar with the lemon's fragrant oil, which makes for a richer punch. Unfortunately, modern sugar cubes lack the abrasiveness or cohesiveness to do the job. If, though, you take a vegetable peeler to the lemons (being careful not to cut into the white pith) and muddle the peels together with loose granulated sugar, you get a similar result. (See "Mastering Muddling", below.)

In the end, most old punch recipes required just a little time and the willingness to take extra pains. For example, making a proper milk punch—a lemon-infused, brandy-based mixture allegedly created by the English playwright and bon

vivant Aphra Behn in the late 17th century—involves letting whole milk curdle in the punch and straining out the solids; the product is something so smooth and luxurious as to be absolutely perilous. As for Batavia arrack, a crucial classic-punch ingredient that had been virtually impossible to come by in the United States since Prohibition, I went so far as to have cases air-freighted from overseas. (That's no longer necessary, as a new brand, Batavia-Arrack van Oosten, is available in the U.S. I've also found that, in a pinch, Brazilian cachaça will supply some of the arrack's characteristic fire.)

Nowadays, when I make a bowl

of, say, Captain Radcliffe's punch, a delightfully mellow brandy-and-wine affair from 1680, or regent's punch, a favorite of England's famously profligate prince regent that calls for ten ingredients, including champagne, and replaces the customary water with brewed green tea, it may take me a good 40 minutes, including all the juicing and muddling. But when it's party time, all my work is done—unless, that is, I'm making a German punschglühbowle, in which case all I have to do once my guests have arrived is ignite the bowl and ladle out portions of the warming wine and arrack topped with a corona of glowing flame.

Generally, though, I get to stand back with a glass in my hand and watch a now familiar dynamic unfold. The seasoned veterans, those who have shared a bowl of real punch before, will step up smartly to the sideboard and ladle themselves a cup. The more adventurous of the new recruits will follow, and soon enough, there's a bit of a crowd around the bowl, and rather a jolly one at that. By this point, most of the doubters have broken down and taken a serving or two: there's something compelling about a communal experience, particularly if all it takes to participate is to stand around sipping something wonderful, made with a formula that was last popular when George the Fourth ruled England. 🍷

*THE PANTRY, page 94: Sources for hard-to-find punch ingredients and equipment.*

## RECIPE

## Regent's Punch

MAKES 3 QUARTS

This tea-infused champagne punch makes an elegant centerpiece for any festive occasion.

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup cubed pineapple
- 2 lemons
- 2 oranges
- 1 seville orange (also called bitter or sour orange; see page 94)
- 2 green tea bags (or 2 tsp. green tea leaves)
- 1 cup brandy, preferably VSOP cognac
- 1/4 cup dark Jamaican rum
- 1/4 cup arrack liquor, preferably Batavia-Arrack van Oosten (see page 94), or cachaça
- 2 750-ml bottles brut champagne, chilled
- Freshly grated nutmeg

1. In a 1-qt. saucepan, combine 1/2 cup sugar and 1/4 cup water. Stir over high heat until sugar dissolves; transfer to a bowl along with pineapple. Allow to macerate in refrigerator for at least 8 hours to make a pineapple syrup. Strain and reserve; discard solids.

2. Using a peeler, peel lemons, oranges, and seville orange, taking off as little white pith as possible. Transfer peels to a heavy bowl; reserve fruit. Add remaining sugar; use a muddler or a wooden spoon to vigorously crush sugar and peels together until sugar turns faintly yellow and slushy (see "Mastering Muddling", at left).

3. In a medium bowl, steep tea in 2 cups of boiling water for 5 minutes. Strain tea over lemon and sugar mixture; stir until sugar dissolves. Juice reserved fruit into tea mixture. Strain through a sieve into another bowl; discard solids. Stir in pineapple syrup, brandy, rum, and arrack. Chill mixture. To serve, combine mixture and champagne in a punch bowl along with a large block of ice (see facing page). Garnish with nutmeg.

## MASTERING MUDDLING



Muddling sugar and citrus peel is a technique called for in many classic punch recipes, including ours for regent's punch (see right) and Captain Radcliffe's punch (see page 70). First, use a vegetable peeler to remove the peel of a lemon or an orange in 3/4-inch-wide strips, taking care to avoid the

bitter white pith. Next, add the strips to a heavy bowl along with the amount of sugar specified in the recipe. Finally, use a muddler—the small, baseball bat-shaped stick used by bartenders—or a wooden spoon to vigorously crush the sugar and citrus peel together. The abrasive sugar helps rupture the citrus's cell walls and release the flavorful oils within. You'll know that's happened when the sugar takes on the color of the peels and becomes moist, slushy in texture, and intensely fragrant. The result is a concentrated, aromatic base that cuts the astringency of the alcohol in the punch and lends a bright, pleasing taste. —Ben Mims

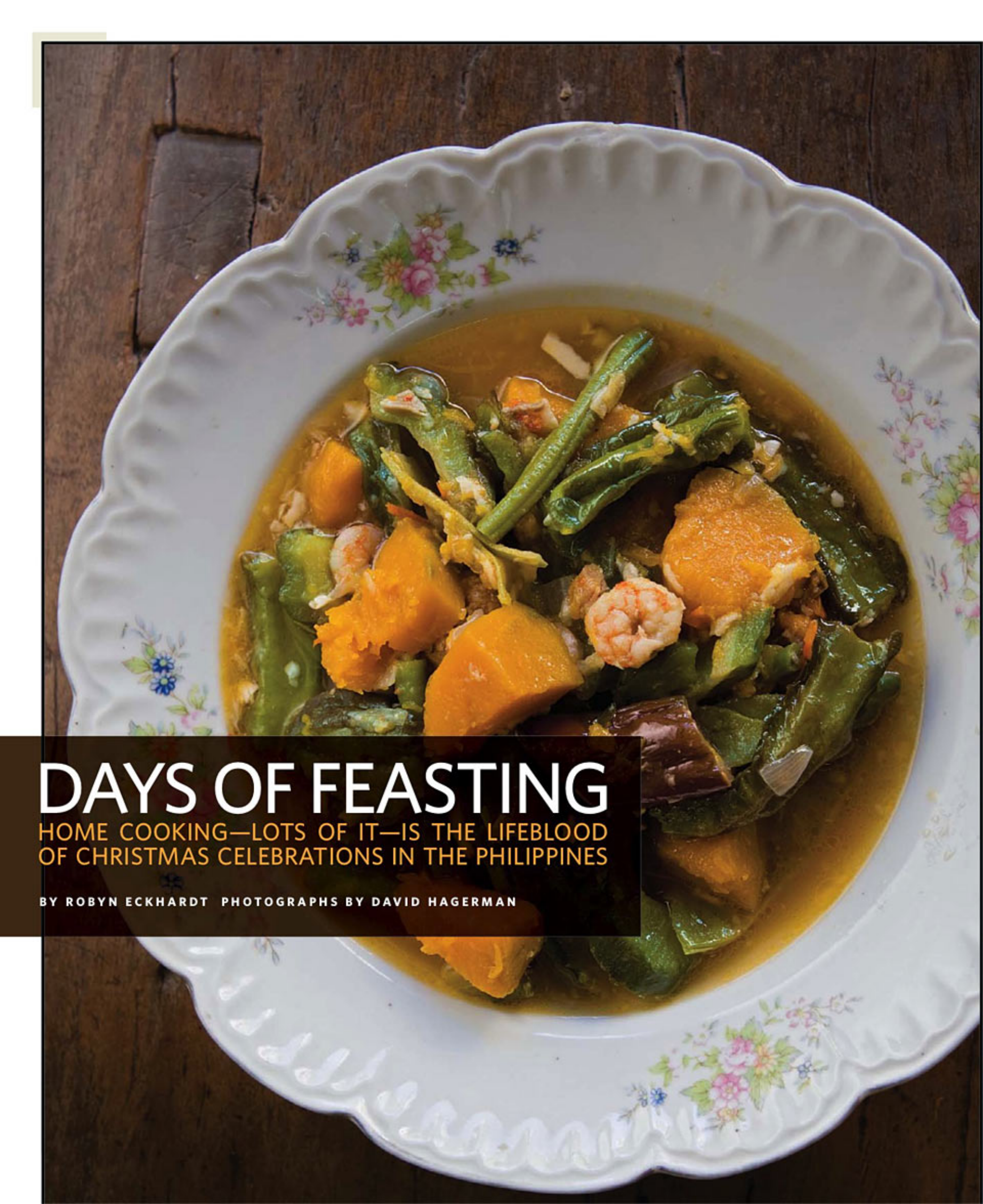




## HOLIDAYS ON ICE

To make a slow-melting ice block like those used in the recipes for Captain Radcliffe's punch and regent's punch, you can freeze water in a halved milk carton for a square-shaped block or in a metal bowl for a round shape, or even in a Bundt pan for a decorative ring. You can also add fruit—such as maraschino cherries and sliced oranges—to the water before freezing it. Allow it to freeze overnight or until frozen solid (larger molds require longer freezing times). To release the ice, dip the bottom of the mold in hot water and invert.



A top-down photograph of a white ceramic bowl with a scalloped rim and floral patterns. The bowl is filled with a yellowish-orange soup. Inside the soup are several green beans, large chunks of orange squash or pumpkin, and a few shrimp. The bowl is placed on a dark, textured wooden surface.

# DAYS OF FEASTING

HOME COOKING—LOTS OF IT—IS THE LIFEBLOOD  
OF CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

BY ROBYN ECKHARDT PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID HAGERMAN





Left to right, top row to bottom row: a portrait of Marc Medina's grandmother, the author's friend; a rice farmer near Arayat; pedicabs in Arayat; smoked fish for sale; Lucia Mallari with one of her granddaughters; plantanillas (egg yolk crêpes filled with pastillas, a paste of water buffalo milk); a lunch that includes lechon (roasted pork); achara, a Philippine sweet pickle; dawn mass in Arayat. Facing page, pinakbet (Philippine vegetable stew).



## PHILIPPINES

IT WAS NINE IN THE MORNING in Arayat, a small town about an hour north of the Philippine capital city of Manila, in the province of Pampanga, and I'd already been to mass and consumed two breakfasts—one of coffee and sweet-savory cassava cakes topped with cheese and butter, called bibingka, and another of puto puti, puffy rice-flour treats, bought from street vendors around town. I was about to get to work on a third. Seated at the edge of the wood-pillared, thatched-roof kitchen of my friend Marc Medina's nearly 200-year-old house, which sits not far from the old rice plantation his family used to run, I gazed at the breakfast table. It seemed to sag under the weight of all the food on it: fried eggs, pork sausages, slices of cured pork called tocino, fried catfish, rice porridge, sticky rice steamed in banana leaves, and a stack of freshly baked

ensaimada—opulent twists of sweet bread enriched with egg yolks and edam cheese. As I watched Marc and his friends start in on their meal, I tried to get my head around the fact that this was just the beginning.

It was the occasion of the first *misa de gallo* (morning mass) of the Christmas season in the Philippines, the sprawling archipelago of more than 7,000 islands in the western Pacific Ocean. Starting nine days before Christmas and stretching on until the Feast of the Epiphany, on January 6, millions of churchgoing Filipinos—nearly 80 percent of the citizens of this former Spanish colony are practicing Catholics—embark on a series of spirited, family-style and communal feasts.

Everything on the table at Marc's house this morning had been prepared by Lucia Mallari, the 77-year-old woman who has been the head cook for the Medina family for more than 30 years. Marc pointed to a sturdy wooden bench topped with four clay burners and explained that, many decades back, his grandmother had taught Lucia how to prepare the family's favorite Pampangan specialties: unpretentious pork, fish, and vegetable dishes that constitute a sort of heartland cuisine in a country where hearty home cooking is nearly as sacred as mass.

As we ate breakfast, Lucia was at the stove preparing chicken adobo, the flavorful, vinegar-spiked braise that is the Philippines' national dish (see "The Art of Adobo," page 82). When I stepped over to the stove to ask for a peek at the adobo, she handed me her spoon and invited me

to give the pot a stir. Despite my three breakfasts, the alluring aroma of the dish had me already thinking about lunch.

I HAD BEEN HEARING about the Philippines' Christmas feasting season ever since I'd met Marc, a journalist for the Associated Press, a couple of years earlier while on a short trip to the country from my home in Malaysia. He'd invited me to his house in Arayat and treated me to a marathon lunch of 16 dishes, all prepared by Lucia. Some of them had tasted familiar—foods that reflected a broader Southeast Asian penchant for rice, coconut, and fermented sauces (such as patis, a Philippine fish sauce, and bagoong, a pungent shrimp paste)—but there

## RECIPE

## Pinakbet

(Philippine Vegetable Stew)

SERVES 6

Bagoong, a pungent, earth-colored fermented shrimp paste, lends this traditional Philippine dish (pictured on page 76) a pleasing depth of flavor. Take care not to stir the vegetables aggressively during cooking, or they will fall apart. See page 94 for hard-to-find ingredients.

- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 6 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 1 medium red onion, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp. bagoong (Philippine shrimp paste)
- 3 plum tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 3 tbsp. fish sauce
- 1 1-lb. kabocha or other winter squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1" cubes
- 1/2 lb. Asian eggplant, cut into 2" x 1/2" sticks
- 1/2 lb. long beans, cut into 3" lengths
- 1 bitter melon, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, and cut into 1" cubes
- 10 okras (about 4 oz.), left whole
- 15 medium shrimp (about 8 oz.), peeled
- Kosher salt, to taste

1. Heat oil in an 8-qt. pot over medium heat. Add garlic and onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until very soft, about 15 minutes. Add bagoong and tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, until paste becomes very fragrant, about 5 minutes. Add fish sauce, squash, eggplant, beans, melon, and 1/3 cup water. Stir briefly, cover pot, and cook, stirring once or twice, until vegetables soften, about 12 minutes.

2. Add shrimp and okra; cook, covered, until shrimp are just done and okra is tender, 6–7 minutes. Season with salt. Serve with steamed rice.



Clockwise from top: water buffalo near Arayat; Attack, the spit master; Santa Catalina Church after Christmas mass. Facing page, altar boys from the church having breakfast at the Medina home.









Left to right, top row to bottom row: dulce prenda (shortbread filled with candied winter melon); young rice harvested in Pampanga; Lucia and her daughter, Maricris, preparing the post-tennis tournament feast; fish for sale at the Arayat market; Damiana Santiago, Lucia Mallari's best friend; Philippine-style brioche; Arayat residents at lunch after the tournament; preparing for a dawn mass; patis (a fish sauce) and squash for sale at the Arayat market.



## PHILIPPINES

were also local specialties, like afritada (pork and chicken cooked with onions and red peppers) and sisig (sliced banana blossoms sautéed with pork and vinegar).

The meal hinted at the kaleidoscopic culinary legacy left to these islands by Asian and Arab traders, European colonizers, and Japanese and American occupiers over the centuries. Indeed, evidence of the role of outsiders in Philippine history was easy to come by, especially in Pampanga, whose strategic location in the southwestern corner of Luzon, the Philippines' largest island, made it an auspicious base for American military operations during much of the 20th century. The sprawling former U.S. air base in the Clark Freeport Zone lies just a 45-minute drive from Arayat.

Like many people familiar with the cooking of Southeast Asia, I'd come to love Philippine cooking as the region's comfort food: not intensely or elaborately spiced and frequently characterized by soulful, slow-cooked dishes in which long-grain white rice was invariably the star—more often than not with pork in the supporting role—the cuisine of these islands had always struck me as simultaneously more

ment. One morning, I rose early and, after a breakfast of garlic rice and fried anchovies eaten with a dipping sauce of fish sauce and crushed tomatoes, walked outside, to find two men hoisting the freshly butchered carcasses of two pigs onto spits. The older-looking of the two introduced himself as Attack (a nickname given to him for reasons he would not divulge) and his companion as his son, Delbert. I watched as they seasoned the pig generously with salt and

stuffed its cavity with banana leaves.

The men were preparing to make lechon, roasted pork, which would be the main course at a huge, open-to-all community feast following the amateur tennis tournament that Marc and his family sponsor for Arayat's residents twice a year. Thirty-five years ago, Marc's father mowed down his mother's beloved small fruit orchard and replaced it with a tennis court, an act that caused Marc's mother no small

## RECIPE

## Ensaïmada

(Philippine-Style Brioche)

MAKES 10 ROLLS

Although these fluffy sweet-savory breakfast rolls (pictured on facing page) are traditionally prepared with pork lard, most Philippine cooks nowadays use butter instead. Dutch edam cheese is sprinkled inside and on top of the dough, offering a subtle counterpoint to the breads' sweetness; for a more savory roll, add more cheese. To make these rolls, you will need ten 5 1/2" fluted brioche molds.

|                                            |                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup milk                               | temperature, plus more for greasing                          |
| 3 tbsp. active dry yeast                   | 7 cups sifted flour                                          |
| 3/4 cup sugar                              | 2 eggs, at room temperature                                  |
| 22 egg yolks, at room temperature          | 12/3 cups plus 2 tbsp. grated aged edam cheese (see page 94) |
| 2 cups unsalted butter (4 sticks), at room |                                                              |

1. Heat milk and 1/2 cup water to 115°. Stir in yeast; let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, combine sugar, 12 yolks, and 4 tbsp. butter in the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add yeast mixture and 1 cup flour; beat for 10 minutes. Remove bowl; cover with a damp kitchen towel. Set dough aside in a warm place to let rest, about 15 minutes.

3. Combine eggs and remaining yolks in a bowl. Return bowl of dough to mixer; replace whisk attachment with a dough hook. Working in 4 batches, beat in 1 1/2 cups flour, 3 tbsp. butter, and one-fourth of the egg mixture per batch on medium speed. Scrape down sides of bowl; remove bowl and cover with the towel; set dough in a warm place to let rest for 15 minutes.

4. Return bowl of dough to mixer; knead on medium speed while adding remaining butter in 4 batches. (Stop occasionally to scrape down dough hook.) Continue to knead until dough is elastic, 18–20 minutes.

5. Using your hands, grease a marble slab or other smooth surface with a little butter. Transfer dough to the greased work surface; divide into 10 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a ball; flatten each ball into a 6" circle. Fold edges of each circle in toward center. Transfer dough pieces, seam side down, onto 2 greased baking sheets. Cover with damp towels; set aside in a warm place to let rest for 10 minutes.

6. Line ten 5 1/2" fluted brioche molds with 9" circles of parchment paper. Divide molds between 2 baking sheets. Working with one dough piece at a time, use your hands to press it into a paper-thin, translucent square, about 14" x 14", on the greased surface. (The dough will tear in some places; that's okay.) Sprinkle the dough square with 2 tbsp. cheese. Starting at the edge closest to you, use your fingertips to roll the dough toward the far edge, forming a rope about 1/2" thick. Gently flatten the rope. Roll the rope into a spiral, tucking the end under. Transfer the spiral to a mold, tucked end down. Cover the molds with damp towels; set in a warm place to let rest until almost doubled in size, 1 1/2–2 hours.

7. Arrange a rack in the lower third of oven and heat to 350°. Sprinkle 1 tbsp. cheese over top of each risen dough. Bake breads, one baking sheet at a time, until golden brown and puffed, about 20 minutes. Let breads cool before unmolding.



straightforward and more subtle than the foodways of neighboring cultures. That first, languid, expansive meal at Marc's house had more than confirmed my impressions. I remember asking him whether such a generous spread was typical for a weekday lunch. "This is nothing," he said. "You have to come back for Christmas, when we *really* cook."

My current visit to Arayat was starting to make Marc's comment sound like understatement.

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## PHILIPPINES

## RECIPE

**Adobong Manok**

(Chicken Adobo)

SERVES 4

Adobo (pictured at right) is often called the national dish of the Philippines. The preparation is endlessly adaptable, and nearly every Philippine cook prepares adobo in a slightly different way. Though some add soy sauce to deepen the color of the dish, we followed Lucia Mallari's method, which omits that ingredient. Philippine cooks favor mild-tasting vinegars made from coconut or palm sugar; we found that white wine vinegar makes a fine substitute.

- 4 chicken thighs (about 1 lb.)
- 4 chicken legs (about 1 lb.)
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 14 cloves garlic, slivered
- $1\frac{2}{3}$  cups coconut, palm, or white wine vinegar (see page 94)
- 2 tsp. whole black peppercorns
- 10 bay leaves
- Steamed long-grain white rice (optional)

**1.** Place chicken thighs and legs on a cutting board and, using a heavy cleaver, cut each piece in half crosswise, through the bone. (Alternatively, leave the chicken pieces whole.) Sprinkle chicken pieces generously with salt and place in a 14" nonstick skillet. Add garlic to skillet along with vinegar, peppercorns, and bay leaves. Bring to a boil over high heat; stir briefly, then lower heat and simmer, basting chicken occasionally with liquid, until meat is cooked through and most of the liquid has evaporated, about 40 minutes.

**2.** Increase heat to medium-high. Continue to cook chicken, turning it frequently, until crisp and lightly browned all over, 6–8 minutes. Transfer chicken to a platter and serve with steamed white rice, if you like.

**THE ART OF ADOBO**

Adobos are the Philippines' most beloved, and most versatile, dishes. They consist of meat, poultry, fish, or vegetables (such as okra and eggplant) slow-cooked in an aromatic broth of vinegar or coconut milk, garlic, black pepper, bay leaves, and, sometimes, soy sauce until virtually all the liquid has evaporated. The resulting dish is a sort of inverted braise, with the main ingredient browning at the end of the cooking process rather than at the beginning. The name comes from the Spanish *adobar*, meaning to marinate, but Philippine adobo

doesn't really have much in common with Spanish adobos (vinegar-based condiments) or the adobos of Latin America (where the name usually denotes chile-based rubs soured with lime and vinegar). The dish closest in taste to adobo that can be found in Asia is the Indian specialty vindaloo, a curried stew made with vinegar, an ingredient that Portuguese traders likely brought to the Indian coastal city of Goa in the 1500s. The challenge in making the dish successfully lies in reducing the liquid slowly enough that the main ingredient, which absorbs the flavors of the liquid as it cooks, is fully done by the time the liquid has simmered

away, at which point it sautés and browns in its own savory, rendered fat. The process can be counterintuitive for many Western cooks, who are accustomed to browning early in the preparation of a dish, not at the end. If the main ingredient is done before the liquid has been fully reduced, I often take it out of the pan or the wok and brown it quickly in a separate pan before returning it to the rich, concentrated reduction left in the other pan. Either way, adobo is a tender, beautiful marvel that takes me back to the Philippines every time I make it. —Amy Besa, author of *Memories of Philippine Kitchens* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2006)





## PHILIPPINES

amount of consternation but has been a source of immense pleasure for the town's citizens ever since. Situated just outside the kitchen window of the Medinas' house, the court is as much a community center as a playing field.

Inside the house, Lucia and a small army of helpers were cooking chicken and pork for adobo in oversize woks. I knew that many Filipino cooks add soy sauce to achieve the caramel color prized by adobo aficionados. But when I asked Lucia about her take on whether or not to use the condiment, she said, "Not in this house!" As she cooked, she explained that she believes that the recipe Marc's grandmother had taught her is the "real" version. After the meat had been added to the woks, Lucia stepped to the other end of the stove to tend to a large tray of six-inch-long catfish, which she would fry in vegetable oil and then serve with crisp, raw mustard leaves and *balo-balo*, a tartly pungent paste of fermented shrimp and rice. From the tennis court I could hear the crowd of 50 or more people who had gathered to watch the tournament as they shouted encouragement to the players in a mix of English and Tagalog, one of the major indigenous tongues of the Philippines.

By noon the tennis tournament had ended. After Marc had awarded trophies to the winners, cooks emerged from the house bearing banana leaf-lined wicker platters piled with food and placed them on a long table that had been set up near the courts. Then Attack carried one of the spit-roasted pigs, its skin deeply browned and glistening with fat, over to the table and began to carve it, doling out tender meat and crisp skin to the eager crowd. In ten minutes the buffet table was bare and the *lechon* was stripped of its flesh, at which point Attack removed the pig's head and carried it into the Medinas' kitchen. The head would be added to *paksiw na lechon*, a stew of *lechon* leftovers seasoned with pepper-corns, bay leaves, vinegar, and sugar.

A FEW DAYS LATER, on the morning of Christmas Eve, Marc was preparing to depart for Manila, where the Medina clan has celebrated Christmas for generations. I had decided to stay in Arayat and share *Noche Buena*, the meal that follows the Christmas Eve midnight mass, with Lucia and her family at Lucia's own home nearby. During the week leading up to Christmas, the Medinas' house had been besieged by carolers, ranging from

the accomplished (Arayat's marching band, complete with a baton twirler) to the amateur (ragtag clusters of kids too timid to sing above a whisper). Every caroler was sent away with a 20-peso note (about 50 cents).

Lunch that day would be my last big meal in the Medina kitchen, and Lucia had prepared two of my favorite dishes: *ulang sa gata* (giant freshwater prawns cooked in coconut milk) and *suam na mais* (a corn chowder). At the stove, I peered over her shoulder as she browned a hillock of pounded garlic in a saucepan for the shrimp dish, added coconut milk, *patis*, a bit of vinegar, and sugar (the last addition being a secret passed down from Marc's grandmother), and brought it all to a vigorous boil. Then she placed the prawns in the coconut milk in neat rows and left them to



cook until the fat from their heads seeped out, forming an oily red slick on the surface of the coconut milk. "That's how you know they're done," she said. Next, she prepared the chowder, which entailed little more than grating the corn and adding it, along with its juices, to a pot with garlic, onion, water, and a Maggi chicken bouillon cube; for a garnish, Lucia had taken a handful of fresh squash blossoms from the garden outside. A short while later, we were sitting around the kitchen table, pulling the heads off the tender shrimp and sucking them clean of their coconut-infused fat.

That night, I joined Lucia and her family in Arayat's central square for Christmas



Clockwise from top: a giant freshwater prawn at the Arayat market; prawns being cooked for the dish *ulang sa gata* (prawns in coconut milk); steamed corn for sale at the Arayat market; two residents of Arayat. Facing page, chicken adobo.



## PHILIPPINES

mass. With Noche Buena and a midweek holiday ahead, Arayat's residents were jubilant, passing around bags of popcorn and chicharron (fried pork rinds) while talking and laughing in anticipation of the midnight service. After the mass, which takes place in the town's central square, I made my way to Lucia's family compound, a cluster of cement-block houses on the edge of the Medinas' orchards. When I arrived, Lucia proudly showed us around her

newly constructed kitchen, freshly painted in shades of turquoise.

Over the past nine days, Lucia had laid out feast after magnificent feast for the Medinas and their guests, but her own Noche Buena supper was simple: pork and vermicelli soup, a stack of sliced white bread, and kalame bolang (sticky rice cooked with coconut milk and brown sugar and eaten with sliced fresh coconut). There wasn't much conversation around the table as I

and the family—Lucia; her daughter, Maricris; her son, Bong, and his wife, Crising; and a bevy of grandkids—ate our late-night meal. Everyone was thinking of bed. Before going to sleep, though, we all repaired to the porch, where we snacked on spaghetti with a sweet, tomato-based sauce, a favorite Philippine party food, while Lucia watched her grandsons trace their names in the night with sparklers, which cast a glow across her smiling face. 

## RECIPE

## Ulang Sa Gata

(Prawns in Coconut Milk)

SERVES 4

This luscious dish (pictured on previous page) gets its richness from unshelled, head-on shrimp, its silky texture from coconut milk, and its pleasant kick from Thai chiles. Serve it with plenty of steamed white rice to soak up the tasty sauce. See page 94 for a source for the flat-bottomed wok called for in this recipe.

- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 10 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 1 small white onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp. fish sauce, plus more to taste
- 1 tbsp. palm, coconut, or white wine vinegar (see page 94)
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 20 head-on, shell-on large shrimp (about 2 lbs.)
- 1 1/2 cups canned coconut milk
- 6 whole green Thai chiles (see page 94)
- Steamed long-grain rice

1. Heat oil in a 14" flat-bottomed wok or a skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring constantly, until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Add onions and cook until soft and lightly browned, 5–6 minutes.

2. Stir in fish sauce, vinegar, and sugar and season with black pepper. Trim shrimp antennae with scissors, then add shrimp to wok along with coconut milk and chiles; stir briefly to combine, cover wok tightly, and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook at a simmer until shrimp are almost cooked through, about 6 minutes.

3. Remove cover from wok; continue to cook, basting the shrimp with the coconut milk, until shrimp are cooked through, about 2 minutes more. Remove from the heat; taste sauce and season with more fish sauce to taste. Transfer to a large, shallow bowl and serve with rice.

## THE GUIDE

## PAMPANGA PROVINCE, THE PHILIPPINES

Dinner with drinks and tip:

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*Many airlines fly from the United States to Manila, the capital of the Philippines. The city lies approximately one hour south of Pampanga, a fertile rice-growing region that's famous for its Philippine home-style cooking. You can also fly from some Asian cities directly to the Pampangan capital city, San Fernando, not far from the former American air base at Clark Field. Hiring a car and driver in Manila or San Fernando is an easy way to explore Pampanga; Filcar Transport is a reliable Manila-based option ([www.filcartransport.com](http://www.filcartransport.com)).*

## WHERE TO STAY

**HOLIDAY INN CLARK** *Mimosa Drive, Mimosa Leisure Estate, Clark Field (63/45/2-845-1888). Rates: \$106 double.* This modern hotel, which offers cheery rooms and a large swimming pool, is a great base for exploring the region.

**HOTEL GRACELANE** *San Agustin, City of San Fernando (63/45/860-6060; [www.hotelgracelane.com.ph](http://www.hotelgracelane.com.ph)). Rates: \$38 double.* This centrally located, simply appointed hotel is surrounded by a lush garden in Pampanga's capital city.

## WHERE TO EAT

**CARREON'S SWEETS & PASTRIES** *472 San Nicolas I, Magalang (63/45/866-0609). Inexpensive.* This third-generation bakery specializes in sweets made with water buffalo milk, such as plantanillas (egg yolk crêpes filled with pastillas, a sweet, creamy water buffalo milk reduction) and empanadalitas (small turnovers filled with

caramelized pastillas).

**CORA HIPOLITO'S BIBINGKA SHOP**

*J. M. Espino Street (next to Santa Catalina Church), Arayat (no phone). Inexpensive.* This bake shop is famous for panara, an empanada-like pastry. Arrive early in the morning; the bakery has closed by the afternoon, when the goodies have invariably run out.

**EVERYBODY'S CAFE**

*Del Pilar, MacArthur Highway, San Fernando (63/45/860-1121). Moderate.* This cafeteria is a stalwart of the Pampangan dining scene; it offers home-style fare such as pako (wild fern tips and tomato salad), betute (stuffed bullfrog), murcon (beef roll served with drippings), and, for dessert, tsokolate (hot chocolate) and candied camote (sweet potato).

**KABIGTING NUTRI AND DELI HALO-**

**HALO, J. M. Espino Street, Arayat (no phone). Inexpensive.** A good place to try halo-halo, a refreshing crushed-ice treat found all over the Philippines. The Pampanga-style version served here is a relatively simple concoction of mashed white beans, pastillas (the buffalo milk paste), and canned corn, all doused with evaporated milk.

**RAZON'S OF PAMPANGA**

*SM Mall, San Fernando (no phone). Inexpensive.* The house specialties are halo-halo and pancit palabok (rice noodles doused with shrimp gravy and topped with crushed chicharron). Don't miss the excellent leche flan, a custard made with sweetened condensed milk.





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### Skinny Dip Cheddar Fondue

Makes 6 appetizer or 4 main-course servings

2/3 cup low-fat (1%) milk  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
2 cloves garlic, crushed and peeled  
1 dried bay leaf  
1/4 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
Pinch grated nutmeg  
4 ounces Cabot 50% Reduced Fat Cheddar, grated  
2 cups raw broccoli florets  
4 large carrots, peeled and cut into spears  
1/2 pint cherry tomatoes  
1 pound small new potatoes, cooked

- 1 In medium saucepan, whisk together milk and cornstarch until cornstarch is completely dissolved (tilt pan to check for any remaining lumps). Add garlic, bay leaf, mustard and nutmeg.
- 2 Place pan over medium-low heat. Whisking constantly, bring mixture to simmer; continue whisking for 1 minute.
- 3 Add cheese and whisk just until cheese is melted and smooth. Remove from heat, discard bay leaf and transfer mixture to fondue pot or place saucepan on warming tray. Serve surrounded with vegetables for dunking.

Nutrition Analysis: Calories 112, Total Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 2g, Sodium 320mg, Carbohydrates 13g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 8g, Calcium 190mg. Based on 6 servings.

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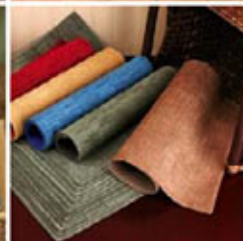


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IN THE SAVEUR

# KITCHEN

Discoveries and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman



## The Finest Cut

**T**HE NAME IN FRENCH MEANS dainty filet, but the filet mignon has a cachet among American eaters that is anything but petite. This lean and singular cut of beef—the most tender in the steer—has been a potent symbol of refined indulgence at least since the American writer O. Henry invoked “filet mignon with champignons” in *The Four Million*, his 1906 story collection about New York City strivers. There are richer, more flavorful steaks—rib eye, flat iron, strip—but none lend themselves to elegant old-world preparations the way the filet does, including wine-enriched pan sauces, pepper crusts, and classical French stock-based sauces such as those featured in “Mother Sauce” (page 45; see page 50 for a recipe for filet mignon with bordelaise sauce). Boneless and containing only a tiny amount of fat marbling, the filet cooks swiftly and calls for rich, boldly flavored accompaniments. The filet mignon is cut from the ten-

derloin, a long, club-shaped muscle that extends along the animal’s backbone, starting from the primal cut known as the sirloin, near the animal’s neck, and tapering to a point inside the short loin, a muscle at the rear of the steer. The tenderloin, which owes its tenderness to the fact that it gets virtually no exercise during the steer’s lifetime, can be bought whole and then roasted (see page 89 for a recipe) or butchered into smaller cuts, among them the filet (also called tournedos) and chateaubriand (usually a thicker roast, cut from the center). (T-bone and porterhouse steaks contain a cross-section of the tenderloin as well.) Banking on filet mignon’s reputation, butchers also frequently apply the term *filet* to the tenderloin as a whole. (See page 88 to learn how to butcher a tenderloin.) As for the filet mignon’s price tag, chalk it up to high demand and low supply: there are only two six-to-eight-pound tenderloins in a 1,200-pound steer. —Sarah Karnasiewicz



## KITCHEN

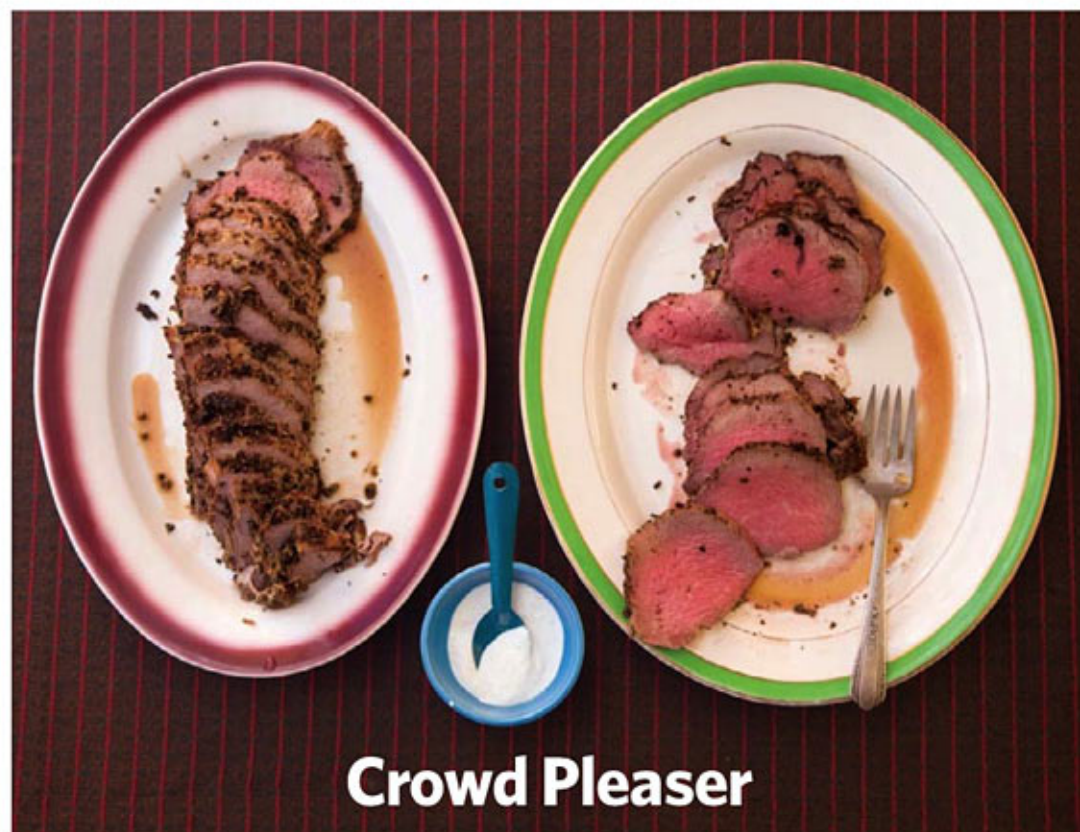
## Easy Filets

If, like most of us, you possess an appetite for filet mignon that regularly exceeds your budget for it, you can save by buying a whole tenderloin and cutting it into steaks. (They are sold with the fat on, as pictured at far left, or cleaned and trimmed, as described below; see page 90 for sources.) For tips on how to do this, we consulted Robert Esposito of Giovanni Esposito & Sons, a butcher shop in New York City. **1** Arrange an untrimmed beef tenderloin in front of you, with the tapered end to your right and the wider, butt end to your left. **2** Using a knife, trim off the long, 1"-wide strip of muscle, known as the chain, that runs the length of tenderloin; reserve for stew meat. **3** Use your fingers to find the seam separating the "ear" (the large, 10"-long lobe extending from the side of the butt end) from the rest of the tenderloin. Separate ear along seam. **4** Trim fat off ear; cut it crosswise into three 2"-3"-thick steaks. **5** Working with the other side of butt end, cut and remove 2 smaller lobes using same method as above; these can be treated as steaks and pan-seared. **6** Pull fat membrane off tail end; it should come off easily. **7** Slip tip of knife under the silver skin, the membrane surrounding most of the muscle. Tilt edge of knife at a slight upward angle; cut away silver skin in a thin strip. Repeat all over tenderloin. Flip; trim away fatty flaps from back. **8** Slice off tail and butt end from the thick center portion, the chateaubriand. **9** Slice butt end and chateaubriand into 2"-3"-thick steaks. **10** Cut a 4"-5" piece off tail; cut it crosswise, three-fourths of the way through. **11** Open this piece at its hinge so that the cut ends face up; tie them together with kitchen twine to form a steak. **12** You should end up with 13-15 steaks; most of them are filet mignon. Wrap each steak in plastic wrap; refrigerate for up to 1 week, or freeze for up to 6 months. —Hunter Lewis





## KITCHEN



## Crowd Pleaser

**M**Y FAMILY'S CHRISTMAS traditions have evolved over the years, but the centerpiece of our Christmas Eve dinner menu has always been the same: an entire roasted beef tenderloin. Not only is it tender and flavorful, but cooking it whole, rather than in separate filet steaks, is quick and easy. It's also an ideal dish for picky eaters because different sections of the tapered cut cook at different rates. At our holiday table, the red-to-pink continuum goes something like this: my grandfather and my aunt get slices of bloodred, rare meat from the thicker, butt end of the roast; the medium-rare slices from the center section (shown above, at right) are portioned out to me and my cousins; and my mom claims the slices from the narrower, tail end, which cooks to a perfect medium (above, left). For years, my grandmother and my aunt took on tenderloin duty, rubbing the beef with salt and pepper and roasting it in a low oven. They recently passed the baton to me, and in the years since, I've taken a few liberties, adding an herb-and-peppercorn crust to the tenderloin and cranking up the oven's temperature in order to achieve a crisp exterior. My adaptations have been well received, for the most part. Last year, my 92-year-old grandfather grumbled, "Are you putting on that damn crust again?" Still, I couldn't help noticing that he took a second helping. —Hunter Lewis

### RECIPE

#### Herb-Crusted Beef Tenderloin with Horseradish Sauce

SERVES 10

- 1 3½–5 lb. fully trimmed beef tenderloin, butt end left intact
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 3 tbsp. dijon mustard
- 3 tbsp. cracked black peppercorns
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh thyme
- 1½ cups sour cream
- 3 tbsp. prepared horseradish

**1.** Put beef on a sheet of plastic wrap; rub with oil. Sprinkle with salt; rub with mustard, then season with pepper, rosemary, and thyme. Wrap in plastic wrap; let sit at room temperature for 1 hour.

**2.** Heat oven to 425°. Place beef on a rack on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest end reads 115°, about 35 minutes. Switch oven to broiler setting; broil until crusty, 5–10 minutes. (A thermometer inserted into thickest end should read 125°.) Let roast rest on a cutting board for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, combine sour cream and horseradish in a bowl to make a sauce. Thinly slice beef and serve with sauce.

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## KITCHEN



## Tenderness Delivered

**N**ORTH AMERICANS WHO DON'T LIVE NEAR A GOOD butcher shop have more options than ever these days for buying a high-quality beef tenderloin (the three-to-six-pound, 15-to-20-inch-long cut from which filet mignon comes; see page 88 for butchering instructions). Many excellent purveyors will ship meat from an array of grades and breeds, from standard American crossbreeds to varieties like Angus and Wagyu, the breed Kobe beef comes from. We purchased tenderloins from a number of different mail-order sources and came up with the following list, which reflects the impressive diversity of flavor and texture available in this single coveted cut of meat. (See *THE PANTRY*, page 94, for ordering information.) —*Ben Mims*

**1 NIMAN RANCH** These five-to-six-pound tenderloins, cut from pasture-raised, grain-finished steer, come partially trimmed of fat and silver skin and are lean, with a delicately grassy flavor (\$170 for USDA Choice; \$200 for USDA Prime).

**2 ALLEN BROTHERS** The tenderloins from this venerable Chicago company, which come with the fat and silver skin removed, are made from corn-fed steer. It also sells juicy USDA Prime filets with a delicate flavor and a firm texture that pair well with a hearty peppercorn crust (\$190 for a 3.5-pound whole USDA Prime tenderloin).

**3 D'ARTAGNAN** This New Jersey-based supplier gets its grain-fed beef from Painted Hills Natural Beef in Fossil, Oregon (though it also offers Wagyu from Texas and Angus and Hereford from Australia); its domestic tenderloin, which comes with the fat, silver skin, and lobes still on it, has a comparatively strong beef flavor (\$175 for a 6-pound USDA Choice tenderloin).

**4 DEBRAGGA AND SPITLER** This New York City company offers certified Angus tenderloins as well as Australian corn-fed Wagyu; the Wagyu steaks are mouthwateringly tender and robustly flavored; a simple sprinkling of salt and pepper serves this beef well (\$300 for a 3.5-pound Wagyu tenderloin).

**5 O. OTTOMANELLI & SONS** This New York butcher shop offers a whole tenderloin dry-aged and enrobed in a layer of beef fat that keeps it moist during roasting; this beef tastes closer to more-flavorful cuts like the rib eye and is best when roasted whole (\$85–\$95 for a 5-6-pound tenderloin, trimmed upon request).

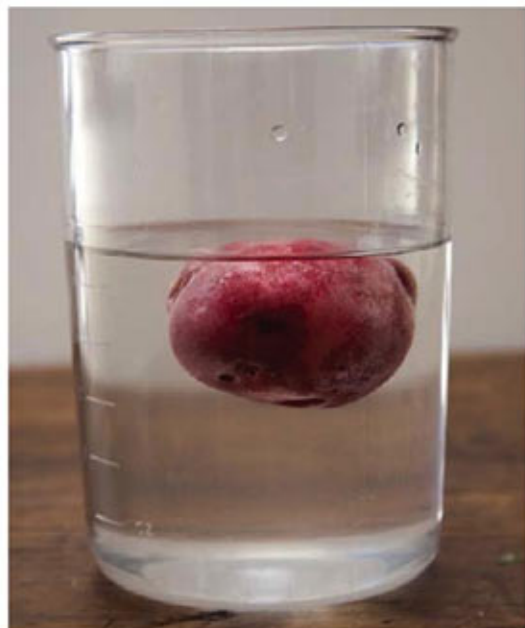
**6 OMAHA STEAKS** These center-cut tenderloin roasts, cut from grain-fed cattle and trimmed of fat and silver skin, have a bold, meaty flavor and smooth, lightly marbled flesh, which remains juicy after cooking. It responds well to browning (\$100 for a 4-pound center-cut roast).



## KITCHEN Waxy Wins

**A**LL POTATOES ARE NOT created equal. For instance, when we began testing the recipe for the Iraqi-style beef and vegetable stew shown on page 63, we used the potatoes we happened to have on hand: russets. But that turned out to be a mistake. By the time the stew had finished its long, languid simmer, those potatoes had, disappointingly, all but disintegrated.

The most crucial factor in selecting a potato is its starch content. The russet is what is known as a floury or mealy potato—which is to say it's high in starch and low in moisture. During cooking, a floury potato's cells swell with water and pull apart from one another. This makes floury varieties excellent for mashing because they pulverize easily. Slightly less starchy varieties, such as yukon golds and yellow finns, are called all-purpose potatoes because they have enough starch for baking or mashing and enough firmness to hold their shape in a soup.



For our stew, a yukon gold might have performed passably, but we opted for a red bliss potato instead, one of the low-starch varieties known as waxy, for their exceptionally firm, smooth texture. To our delight, they ended their long simmer silky and tender and still looking like potatoes; any waxy potato, such as french fingerling or white rose, would have worked.

Testing a potato's starch level, to determine what kind of cooking it is suited for, is easy: simply combine  $2\frac{3}{4}$  cups water with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup all-purpose salt and drop the potato in. If it sinks, it's a floury potato, dense with starch, and if it floats, it's a waxy variety. —Beth Kracklauer

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

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# THE PANTRY

## A Guide to Resources

*In producing the stories for this issue,  
we discovered food products and  
destinations too good to keep to ourselves.  
Please feel free to raid our pantry!*

BY HUNTER LEWIS

### Fare

To order earthenware cooking pots, try Römertopf online for a **Römertopf** roaster (www.romertopfonline.com; ask for "clay bakers"); Sur La Table (800/243-0852; www.surlatable.com) for a Tuscan **mattone** (\$39.95); La Tienda (800/710-4304; www.tienda.com) for a **cazuela** (\$11.95 for the 9-inch model); Berber Trading Company (www.tagines.com) for a **tagine** (\$28 for an 11-by-18-inch tagine); and GourmetSleuth (408/354-8281; www.gourmetsleuth.com) for a Colombian clay **La Chamba** (\$69.95 for a large; ask for an "olla") and a Chinese **sand pot** (\$17.95 for a 1.5-quart pot; ask for a "two-handled Asian clay pot"). To make the Indian-style lamb pot roast, use **garam masala** (\$6.99 for a 2-ounce jar) from Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com).

### Reporter

To make the Mexican egg nog, use **Mexican canela** from MexGrocer (\$1.50 for a ¾-ounce bag; 877/463-9476; www.mexgrocer.com). For the milk fudge, use **mixed candied fruit** from Kalustyan's (\$10.99 for a 1-pound bag; 800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com; ask for "diced/glazed mixed fruit"); **Mexican canela** and **Mexican vanilla extract** from MexGrocer (\$5.95 for a 4.2-ounce jar; see above).

### Classic

To make duck pâté, use a **terrine mold** from Sur La Table (\$129.95 for a 1½-quart mold; ask for the "pâté terrine"; 800/243-0852; www.surlatable.com) and **piment d'Espelette** from Di Bruno

Bros. (\$16.99 for a 1-ounce can; 888/322-4337; www.dibruno.com). To taste Sylvain Gasdon's charcuterie, visit Bar Boulud (1900 Broadway, New York, New York; 212/595-0303; www.danielnyc.com).

### Pandolce

To make pandolce, use **candied orange peel** (\$16.99 for a 1-pound bag; ask for "glazed orange peel slices") from Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com).

### French Sauces

The **École Supérieure de Cuisine Française-Ferrandi** offers a five-month-long bilingual program (www.egf.ccip.fr/escf/english). In a pinch, substitute homemade **demi-glace** with the following store-bought brands: Natural Classics DemiGlace from Le Vichyssois (\$8.50 for a 1-pound tub; 815/385-8221; www.levichyssois.com); D'Artagnan Veal Demi-glace (800/327-8246; www.dartagnan.com; \$5.99 for a 7.5-ounce tub); Williams-Sonoma Veal Demi-Glace (\$29 for a 10.5-ounce jar; 877/812-6235; www.williams-sonoma.com); and More Than Gourmet Glace de Veau Gold (\$5.65 for a 1.5-ounce package; 800/860-9385; www.morethangourmet.com).

### Iraqi Home Cooking

To make the spice mixture, use **white cardamom pods** (\$9.99 for a 1.5-ounce jar) and **dried rose petals** (\$6.99 for a 1-ounce pack) from Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com). You'll also find **lavash** (\$5.99 for 4 pieces) and **dried sumac powder** (\$3.99 for a 2-ounce pack) from Kalustyan's.

### Punch

To make the regent's and flaming red wine punches, order **seville oranges** (prices and availability vary according to season) from Melissa's/World Variety Produce (800/588-0151; www.melissas.com) and **Batavia-Arrack van Oosten** (\$32.99 for a 750-ml bottle), which can be found at Union Square Wines (212/675-8100; www.unionsquarewines.com).

### Philippines

To make the vegetable stew, use **shrimp paste** (\$3.99 for a 250-gram jar; ask for "bagoong") from Oriental Super-Mart (954/970-8868; www.orientalsuper-mart.com). Order **bitter melons**, **long beans**, **Asian eggplants**, and **kabocha squash** from Melissa's/World Variety Produce (prices vary according to season; 888/588-0151; www.melissasfarm.freshproduce.com). To make the prawns in coconut milk, use a **flat-bottomed wok** (\$16.95 for a 14-inch iron/enamel wok) from the Wok Shop (415/989-3797; www.wokshop.com), and **green Thai chiles** from Import Food (\$15.95 for a 16-ounce bag; 888/618-8424; www.importfood.com). To make the brioche, use **edam cheese** from Ideal Cheese (\$15.95 for a 2-pound ball; 800/382-0109; www.idealcheese.com). To make the chicken adobo, use **palm vinegar** (\$15.99 for a 750-ml bottle) or **coconut vinegar** (\$13.99 for a 750-ml bottle; ask for "natural coco vinegar") from Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com).

### Kitchen

Mail-order **filet mignon** and **beef tenderloin**: Niman Ranch (866/808-0340; www.nimanranch.com); Allen Brothers (800/957-0111; www.allenbrothers.com); D'Artagnan (800/327-8246; www.dartagnan.com); DeBragga and Spitler (www.debragga.com); O. Ottomanielli & Sons (212/675-4217); and Omaha Steaks (800/960-8400; www.omahasteaks.com). Visit Giovanni Esposito & Sons (500 Ninth Avenue, New York, New York; 212/279-3298).

*Items marked with P also appear, with photographs, in our Visual Pantry at www.saveur.com/visualpantry116.*

### Correction

In our October 2008 issue, the source for **Sant'Eustachio Italian Roast** is Gustiamo (\$20.00 for 8.45 ounces; 718/860-2949; www.gustiamo.com).





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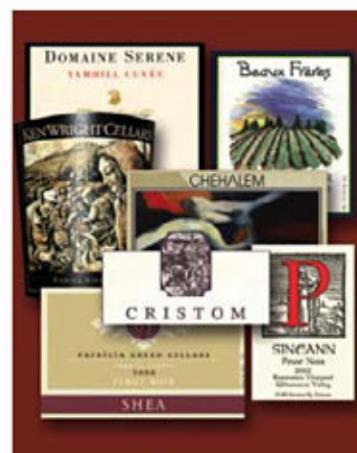


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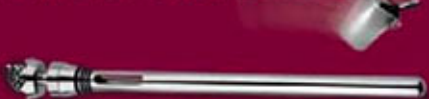
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*Servers add sparkle to the plum pudding at the American Mormon Mission's holiday party.*

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